

Gateway 2000 Wins The Amiga!—page 42.

Amazing / AMIGA

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QuikPak Welcomes Gateway 2000 to the Amiga Community

Once again it seems that the Amiga Community is subjected to another sharp turn on the rollercoaster that is the future of the Amiga. The recent announcement by Gateway 2000 that its bid to purchase the assets of Amiga Technologies has been successful is truly a surprise. Yet, it is a surprise that holds much promise.

Gateway 2000 is a tremendous success story - continually scoring top marks in customer satisfaction surveys based on service, support, and product reliability. Gateway 2000 is a leader in its market, and brings to the Amiga Community a wealth of resources and knowledge.

While we are understandably disappointed that our own bid was unsuccessful, we at QuikPak remain as committed as ever to the future of the Amiga. We have devoted a large portion of our energies to developing the Amiga market and supporting the community, and we have no intention of abandoning our position now. The Gateway 2000 purchase may represent an excellent opportunity to breathe new life into the Amiga platform. We've maintained all along that we believe in the future of the Amiga, and stand by our statements.

Thank you once again for your continuing support, and we look forward to bringing you new information as it becomes available. We look forward to working with you, the user, and all our other partners in making the Amiga's future as bright as possible. And, we look forward to the opportunity of working with the newest player in the Amiga field, Gateway 2000.

Sincerely,
Dan Robinson
Director of Business Development
QuikPak

Dave Ziembicki
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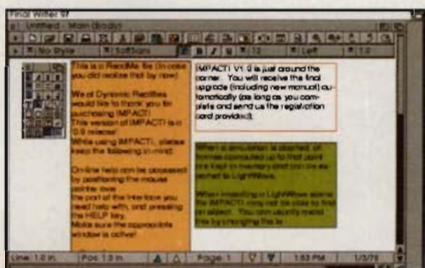
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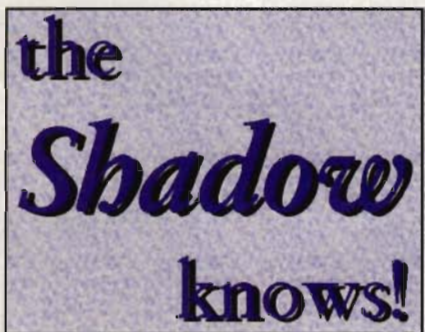
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Editorial Content

GATEWAY 2000?

We have a winner!

Let's face it. No one saw this coming. Gateway 2000 was a dark-horse bidder. Their name had not come up in any conversations prior to their announcement on March 27. In fact, two days before the announcement, I received a call from an Amiga supporter who had received clear information that the Amiga was about to be purchased by the "Chinese".

The "Chinese" have come up many times in Amiga lore. I have been told that they were at the final bidding of Amiga two years ago when ESCOM won and I have been told that they were responsible for bank rolling as many as four different investment groups who were chasing after the Amiga.

While I knew it was not impossible, after all the Chinese are getting Hong Kong back, I could not rationalize why the Amiga would be that important to them. If it was a line of computers they were interested in, they could continue the PC clone business or produce Macintosh clones with the money they were supposedly offering for the Amiga and gain a great deal more success.

In order to be successful with the Amiga, two things are required: an ongoing commitment to the platform and its development as well as sales and marketing (or should that read marketing and sales) of the system. While I am not saying the Chinese would have not been willing to do this, the question is, "Why would they?"

Gateway 2000's Goal?

While waiting for a clear response from Gateway 2000, many Amiga fans have offered their own expectations of Gateway 2000's goals. These range from the euphoric (Gateway 2000 will use the Amiga technology in all their machines as well as develop 300 MHz systems for next fall) to the paranoid (Gateway 2000 bought the Amiga in a side deal with Bill Gates to bury the Amiga technology and kill it forever). Obviously the truth lies somewhere in-between.

Some Amiga users have feared openly that Gateway 2000 is only interested in the Amiga technology to create their own settop box system and/or integrate Amiga technology into their existing line of Destination convergence TVs. The anxiety is that Gateway 2000 will discard the open development of new Amigas and stop producing Amiga computers. They believe that this new market is enough justification for buying the Amiga. The expected millions created by converging Amiga, PC, and television together will offer Gateway 2000 the edge they will need in the growing computer industry. However, Gateway has expressed their ideals differently.

In the March 27th release, Rick Snyder, president and COO of Gateway 2000, is quoted as saying, "This acquisition is good news for Gateway and customers of AMIGA. It will strengthen our intellectual property position and invigorate a company that has been a pioneer in multimedia solutions and operating systems technology."

While it is almost a certainty that Gateway 2000 bought the Amiga to utilize the technology (you don't buy a car to put it in a barn, unless you are Jay Leno), it is also apparent from the statement above and from the history of Gateway 2000 that they do not throw away resources. Although the price for Amiga Technologies remains unknown, most inside sources guess at a figure between \$15 million to \$16 million. To purchase the Amiga for technology which could have been licensed outright or even produced in house for a lot less would be wasting resources.

The value of any technology or proprietary system is not in its onetime use. The value is from its potential and, with the Amiga, that potential has been a constant.

Amiga's Wealth

The Amiga's wealth is based on loyal Amiga users who still support the platform and on its developers because they believe the Amiga's operating system has unique advantages. The Amiga's wealth is in third-party developers who know the platform, understand its possibilities, and will develop the next level of software. And, now, the Amiga's wealth is in its position as a division of a company that did over \$5 billion in sales last year with a net profit of \$250 million.

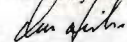
Gateway 2000 knows that they cannot utilize the technology in the Amiga without providing computers and development for the marketplace. You cannot program for a settop box without a computer to program. They also know that to maintain the system's value, they need to continue proprietary development and advance the system.

For once, the Amiga has a North American company who understands marketing and technology worldwide, who has the resources to do great things, and who has a proven track record of customer satisfaction. In short, aren't these the exact things most of us have wanted. Our only problem is that we want to know immediately what Gateway will do.

Gateway 2000 has promised to hold a press conference on May 17 at the World of Amiga near London. Since the July issue of *Amazing Computing* will already be at press on that date, we have made arrangements with our printer to hold several pages for late entry so we can give our readers the latest information.

I hope they are ready. I am sure they did not expect the reaction they have received from Amiga users worldwide. I am also certain that they were not fully assured that they were going to get Amiga Technologies until the announcement. So, there is no doubt that they have had to review their strategies. But, they have it (barring any regulatory objections) and Amiga users are preparing for the next generation of the Amiga.

Sincerely,



Don Hicks
Managing Editor

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FEEDBACK

"If it does what you want, then enjoy it. Just because the Amiga does not run "Windows" does not make it a non-computer."

Dear AC,

Enclosed is my check to continue my subscription to *Amazing Computing/Amiga* magazine. I have never written a letter to any magazine before, but I felt the need to do so in this case. I keep hearing from "PC" users how the Amiga is not a "real" computer, and frankly I am sick of it. If it does what you want, then enjoy it. Just because the Amiga does not run "Windows" does not make it a non-computer. I am an active member of the Southern Nevada Amiga Group and will be until either I die, or I am removed from membership. I own several Amigas and love it! I have to use a computer at work, and I wish it was one of mine instead of a "Wintel". Whoever buys the Amiga will hopefully continue on, and improve the technology (as QuikPak seems to have already begun).

At any rate, the Amiga will live on due to users and "fanatics" like myself, but we need to support the software companies, as well as the brilliant shareware programmers that work only for the love of making some little program that we would

enjoy using. Plus the third party companies that make the terrific extras we add to our machines. For example, my A500, it has GVP A530 Turbo, DKB Megachip and RTOM switcher, an A-Hive Floptical, NEC 3XP CDROM drive, Iomega Zip drive, Sharp JX100 color scanner, Practical Peripherals 14.4 modem, GVP DSS8 sound digitizer, Digital Creations" DCTV, Star Micronics 2420 color printer, 2 Air drives, 1 Alfa Data drive, and last but not least, an Alfa Data trackball. It has taken a long time to buy, sell and trade all the equipment attached to this computer, and I still have a bunch of stuff on my A2000, and I am working on my A3000.

The one thing I enjoy most, besides using them of course, is the fact they can be easily upgraded or added to in true "plug and play" and not "shrug and pray" fashion. I will never go to the other platforms as long as I can enjoy the Amiga and read *Amazing Computing/Amiga* magazine. Your magazine has helped me in more ways than I can ever count.

Sincerely,
Glen A Blair
N Las Vegas NV

Thanks, Glen, for the kind words and your comments. As you can see from the articles and coverage in this issue, Gateway 2000, a producer of Wintel computers has apparently won the bid for the Amiga. I believe that, had the Amiga been of little consequence, Gateway 2000 would not have been interested. Apparently the Amiga has a great deal to offer the personal computing industry and Gateway 2000 will be in the position to take advantage of that.

While Gateway 2000 has not yet been able to release their intentions,

speculation has run rampant on the nets and in the trade press. The only thing anyone knows for sure is that Gateway 2000 did not need to purchase the Amiga to squash it (the apathy of the market over three years of neglect would have done that). Gateway 2000 could only want the technology to use and expand. This just may be the best way to get Amiga technology into the mainstream.

I also was impressed at your call for support of software and hardware developers. None of us would still be viable in the Amiga market without the continued work by these people.

Dear AC,

I am writing in regard to the article "Just Do It", Ask Kim Komando in the April 1997 issue of *Computer Life Magazine*. From a hard core Amigan, it is nice to see the mention of the Amiga in this publication meant more for the "Clone" market. Ms Komando's inclusion of the Amiga as an environment to view graphic files was almost like a fresh breeze on a hot summer day. There have been so many times I've wanted to send in my two cents. Finally got off my ergo-chair! Thanks for being *Amazing, Amiga*.

Chris Martin
East Jordan MI

P.S. My Amiga runs my recording studio, among other things! I'm not giving up.

With Gateway 2000's revelation, we should see a lot more coverage of the Amiga in the PC trade press. Let's hope we can maintain positive exposure in this unlikely environment.

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Ben Vost, Amiga Format, March'97

"The Siamese is definitely the must-have peripheral for Amiga owners with PC's" "All in all the Siamese System is something so important to the future of the Amiga that it's hard to really explain just what is so good about it."

What The Press Have To Say!



Product Of The Year

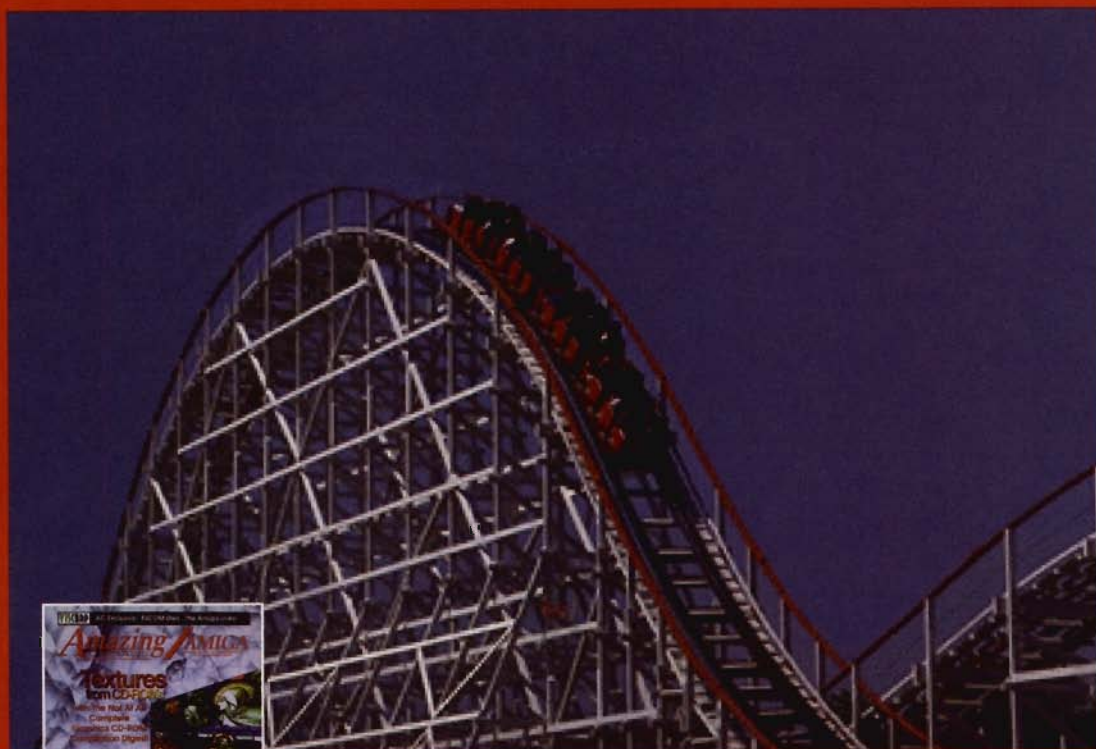
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International,
December 96**

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**Gateway 2000
wins the Amiga,
but will not speak
until May 17th.**

NEW PRODUCTS

and other neat stuff



Gateway 2000 wins Amiga! — Almost

The hottest news this month is the Gateway 2000 purchase of the Amiga. Gateway 2000 released an announcement on March 27 (just too late for the May issue), that they had made an offer for Amiga Technologies "including all patents, trademarks and trade names" and that the offer had been accepted, "by the court-appointed Administrator in Bankruptcy in Germany acting on behalf of AMIGA. The agreement is subject to regulatory approval."

"This acquisition is good news for Gateway and customers of AMIGA," said Rick Snyder, president and COO of Gateway 2000. "It will strengthen our intellectual property position and invigorate a company that has been a pioneer in multimedia solutions and operating systems technology."

According to the original release, "AMIGA Technologies will be renamed AMIGA International. The company will operate as a separate business unit and will retain its current president, Petro Tyschtschenko, who will work to develop new products for the AMIGA market."

Petro Tyschtschenko, President of Amiga Technologies, was quoted in the release, "Gateway 2000 will give us new life and energy for the future." In an exclusive interview with *Amazing Computing*, Mr. Tyschtschenko stated, "I am so pleased that I found a new home for the Amiga. Gateway 2000 is a great company. They know what a treasure they have bought." Mr. Tyschtschenko will head up Gateway 2000's new Amiga International company in Germany.

Gateway 2000 has been reluctant to offer more information on their plans for the Amiga. In a later announcement, released April 17, Gateway 2000 stated:

Gateway 2000 is still waiting for the final approval from the German bankruptcy court to complete the acquisition of the assets of Amiga Technologies. Gateway 2000 is working hard to explore how to expand the world of Amiga.

The press releases and news announcements in New Products are from Amiga vendors and others. While Amazing Computing maintains the right to edit these articles, the statements, etc. made in these reports are those of the vendors and not Amazing Computing.

Amiga International and Gateway 2000 have received many positive responses from the Amiga community and wanted to keep the community informed of the progress of the acquisition. Amiga International plans on further communications regarding our strategy (pending final approval) during a press conference at the World of Amiga on May 17th and May 18th in London.

For more information on Gateway 2000 as well as reaction to the news by the Amiga community, please read the article on page 42 of this issue.

PAGEMONSTER 1.0

Amiga Web Design with Pagemonster

CultureShock Multimedia has announced Pagemonster 1.0, a new web page generation tool for the Amiga Computer. Pagemonster incorporates a point and click interface with a modular, nonlinear approach to the construction of web pages. This method allows users to gather, arrange and preview all the elements that will comprise their final page into an unlimited number of layouts before saving.

Pagemonster 1.0 requires no knowledge of HTML and contains digitized voice narration to guide users through Pagemonster's operation. Page designers can use their favorite paint programs, image processors, text editors and sound sampling software from inside Pagemonster. External links can be stored and any associated files for later use in other pages. Form wizards allow designers to generate forms for user input with just a few clicks of a button. Plug-in support allows Pagemonster to grow and evolve with the changing HTML standards of the World Wide Web. Designers can create multiple page suites and save everything to disk, media files and all, to upload later or rework.

Pagemonster requires an Amiga OS 3.0 or greater, at least 6MB of Ram, AmigaVision Player and Runtime libraries, the Append command, and at least 8MB of Hard drive space. If you purchase Pagemonster 1.0 directly from Culture Shock before July 1997, you will be able to obtain a copy at a special price of \$49.95. Pagemonster's normal retail price is \$69.95.

CultureShock Multimedia, 2319 North 45th street, Suite 296, Seattle, Washington 98103. email: cshock@serv.net, web site: <http://www.serv.net/~cshock/main.html>.

TERMITE TCP

New Version - Lower Price! Only \$49.95!
Now includes E-Mail client and regular Termite!



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- ✓ Runs on ANY Amiga with Kickstart 2.04 or above
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- ✓ Optimized PPP support with PAP/CHAP built directly in
- ✓ GUI telnet, ftp, and e-mail clients supplied.
- ✓ Programmers Developers Kit provided for third party clients
- ✓ Patch library allows AmiTCP clients to work with Termite TCP
- ✓ Now includes regular Termite V1.12! (upgradable to V1.21)
- ✓ Termite TCP is smaller, easier to use, consumes fewer system resources, and is faster online than any alternative. The provided clients, written documentation, and regular Termite make it the ONLY one stop telecommunications solution for your Amiga.
- ✓ Competitive upgrades are available from AmiTCP or Miami with proof of purchase.

ibrowse

THE World Wide Web Browser for Your Amiga!

IBrowse supports more HTML features, like Animated GIF's and Frames, than any other Amiga browser! With it's easy to use GUI and features like multi-level hollists, configurable fastlinks, and local disk caching. IBrowse makes surfing the World Wide Web a breeze! Let Termite TCP and IBrowse help you experience the excitement of the Internet!

Coming Soon! PRO CLIENT PACK

We are proud to announce the release (April '97) of Professional versions of the internet clients supplied with Termite TCP.

- ✓ **Termite FTP PRO** includes the complete FTP command set and adds exciting features like dual directory view and drag and drop file transfers.
- ✓ **Termite Telnet PRO** extends the standard telnet client to include features like editable review buffers, programmable keyboard macros, and zmodem file transfers!
- ✓ **Termite Mail PRO** is the complete e-mail solution for single users or businesses alike with powerful features like multiple mail box support, automatic e-mail posting and retrieval, flexible addressbook, macros, and drag & drop mailing.

Each of the Professional clients will run under AmiTCP, Miami, or TermiteTCP. They will be available separately or as part of the ProClient Pack, which will also include additional bonus clients. (P.S. Termite News is coming soon too!)

CINEMA 4D Version 3 Upgrades are now available. Also exciting new Cinema 4D addons: **Cinema World** is a flexible and powerful automatic world and terrain generator; **Cinema Font** a large collection of scalable 3D Postscript fonts. A 4D world awaits your command!

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Circle 142 on Reader Service card.

Siamese System RTG v2.0

HiQ Ltd. has announced the release of the Siamese RTG. The Siamese RTG allows your Amiga to connect with and work simultaneously with a PC. The Siamese RTG software will ship with a 256 color Workbench which can be displayed on the PC graphics card in any resolution your graphics board is capable of in 16 bit color mode. Solid window movement and 16 bit color backdrops are available for screen and windows. Programs that are system friendly and are not heavily bitmap oriented will open on the RTG display and operate faster than AGA 256 DBLPal type screen modes.

HiQ has promised that the Siamese RTG software will be further enhanced and improved over the next 3 months when a version 2.1 upgrade will be made available free of charge to all those who purchase in March and April only. HiQ wants their customers to feel confident in the software and also allow them to recoup the heavy development costs spent. The version 2.0 software is Windows NT4 and Win95 compatible. Once the Siamese RTG v2.1 is

released then the upgrade price will be increased to about £80. Current upgrade price is £59.95 +P&P.

The Siamese system is sold in North America by **Anti Gravity Products**, 1649 16'th St., Santa Monica, CA 90404, Sales 800-7-GRAVITY, Customer Service 310-399-7782, and on the web at <http://www.antigravity.com>.

Asimware Upgrades

Asimware Innovations Inc. has announced upgrades to their two popular CD-ROM access and authoring tools: AsimCDFS v3.8 and MasterISO v1.25b

AsimCDFS v3.8 is a maintenance update for the AsimCDFS v3 package with support for new CD-ROM drives, including the Pioneer 12x, Nakamichi 4.8, Toshiba XM-3801, Toshiba XM-5701 and the Philips CDD2600; as well as support for the Corel Stock Photo Library #3. AsimCDFS v3.8 also contains updated language catalogs and German localization of the installation procedure.

The AsimCDFS software package is a CD-ROM control system which allows the user to read most CD-ROM discs with an

Amiga computer and a suitable SCSI or ATAPI CD-ROM drive.

AsimCDFS allows access to ISO 9660, High Sierra, Rock Ridge and Macintosh HFS CD-ROM formats. Each package contains FishMarket, a CD-ROM disc containing the public domain Fred Fish collection and AsimTunes, an audio librarian/controller providing advanced librarian and playback features. There is also support for direct digitizing from standard audio CDs and playing audio on the Amiga hardware; CDTV and CD32 emulation modules, complete with autobooting from CD-ROM discs; integrated support for Kodak and Corel PhotoCD discs. Color WorkBench icons are created for easy identification; as well as support for both SCSI and ATAPI CD-ROM drives.

MasterISO v1.25b, is a maintenance update for the MasterISO v1 package which adds support for the Philips CDD2600. The MasterISO software package allows a user to control a CD-R recorder to create custom CD-ROM and CD-Audio discs. CD-ROM discs are

CONTROL TOWER

Now Includes Over 200 Macros!

SOAR TO NEW HEIGHTS WITH THE FLYER

With the popularity of NewTek's Toaster Flyer, there are now squadrons of users out there firing up their Toasters and Flying off to exciting new places every day. Control Tower is dedicated to enabling the Flyer to take you farther and in less time by providing a simple, convenient, timesaving interface with tons of options.

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- Batch Image Process Clips & Frames through ImageFX
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- Batch File Conversions
- Build projects and automatically put transitions in between clips
- Run ANY program directly from the Flyer screen
- Globally Change Transition Speeds, FS Lengths, Volume, etc...

...the list goes on and on. Best of all, YOU are firmly in the pilot's seat.

Control Tower accomplishes it's many tasks by using many flexible and powerful Macros & ARexx scripts in conjunction with the Switcher, ImageFX, Toaster Paint, Amiga DOS, and LightWave to automatically process your frames.

With Control Tower you can rest assured that all your Flyer Projects will arrive safely ahead of schedule at the terminal - and your baggage will never end up in Reykjavik.

Flyer 4.1 & Image FX 2.6 or above required for Control Tower.

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Visual



You don't have to go all the way to Hollywood any more to get those fantastic visual effects you've seen on the big screen. Now you can have Visual FX premiering on your monitor screen at thousands and thousands of dollars below the cost of those mega-expensive high-end ADO type systems.

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For those of you who are already familiar with ImageFX, you have the option to change any of our default settings to meet your needs. Whether you're a beginner or highly experienced videographer, either way Visual FX will give your interactive and video productions all the sharp quality you've come to expect from ImageFX. Visual FX is also perfect for using with the NewTek Flyer, VLAB Motion Board, Draco, PAR, and the Digital Broadcaster Elite.

For those using nonlinear video editing systems, the transition FX are designed specifically for creating transitions between video clips, and the Special FX templates provide fast and easy access to a number of high quality special video effects which are easily modified and manipulated for your needs. Each volume comes with 20 effects, each of which has a full 30 frame preview animation attached to it so you will know exactly what the effect will look like. All you have to do is select what images, sequences, or Flyer Clips you want to use, and Visual FX will do the rest. Our requesters actually open up right on the ImageFX screen and walk you through each step. The User Interface is also designed to allow easy setup of multiple effects for automated batch processing.

Volumes for LightWave also available!
ImageFX 2.6 or above required for Visual FX.

Circle 145 on Reader Service card.

Visual Inspirations

NEW FROM BLACK FOREST PRODUCTS GmbH JET FIRE 132

Black Forest Products is pleased to announce a 68030-25MHz accelerator that will speed up your Amiga A1200 computer more than 400 percent. The Jet Fire 132 is priced substantially lower than any of its competition.

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PRICE FOR EVERYBODY \$109.95
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CONGRATULATIONS GATEWAY 2000
Paxtron congratulates Gateway on their acquisition of Amiga Technologies.

••••• IMPORTANT NOTICES

REPAIR SERVICES

In the middle of June we will be opening our **service facility and technical department** to the general public. For years Amiga dealers and service centers worldwide have relied on our expedient service and very reasonable prices. In next month's issue we will publish a full price list for Amiga repairs.

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formatted in the universal ISO 9660 format, compatible with Amiga, IBM, Macintosh and virtually any other CD-ROM equipped platform. CD-Audio discs are formatted to the Red Book standard and offer universal compatibility with standard CD players.

MasterISO v1.25b supports Yamaha CDR-100, CDR-102; Sony CDU-920, Sony CDU-924; Pinnacle RCD-1000, RCD-202, RCD-5040; Philips CDD-522, CDD-521, CDD2000; Pioneer DW-S114X; HP 4020; as well as TEAC CD-R50. MasterISO v1.25b will also recognize Philips CDD2600; JVC 2010; Smart and Friendly 1002, 2004; and Mitsumi

Registered users can obtain AsimCDFS v3.8 or MasterISO v1.25b with their AsimCDFS serial number via Asimware's BBS, WWW or ftp site. ftp: <ftp://ftp.asimware.com>; WWW: <http://www.asimware.com>; or BBS: (905)332-9207

The Mark of Zorros Returns: New A1200 Zorro Slot Revisions

New Micronik Zorro 2 Rev. 5.42

Micronik Computer Service has introduced a new Zorro 2 revision that has

5 zorro 2 slots, 2 PCI slots, and 2 ISA slots, plus a Video Slot. This new board fixes many bugs of previous revisions having a passthru for a 1260 or 1230 Blizzard accelerator. It fits into CeV Designs Model 4A Case with a 250 watt power supply, and has a high compatibility with cards. XP Chassis Model 4A (Za board) is \$619.00 + \$30.00 S&H, Video Slot Option is \$99.00

New Micronik Zorro 3 in May

Micronik also announced their new Zorro 3 board can be ordered now and will be delivered in May. This new board is a completely different transformer from the Zorro 2 boards. It will turn an A1200 into an A4000 with at least 5 zorro 3 slots and a CPU slot. It is just like an A4000 requiring an A4000 Turbo card to operate and also requires V3.1 operating system. This will be in the Model 4C case with the 250 watt and 11 drive bays. A keyboard interface will also be supplied. More details on this slot are forthcoming. XP Chassis Model 4C (Z3 board) is \$789.00 + \$30.00 S&H.

New Eagle Zorro 2 Rev 2.0

Not to be left behind, Eagle also has a new zorro 2 slot that has 7 zorro 2, 2 video slots, and 5 ISA slots with the passthru for a Blizzard board or DKB Cobra. Video slot requires extra options. This new board also corrects bugs in the previous revision and works well in expanding an A1200 in a tower case running a Picasso, for instance. This fits CeV Designs Model 4B Case with the 250 watt power and 11 drive bays with the A1200 keyboard interface. The XP Chassis Model 4B (Z2 board) is \$589.00 + \$30.00 S&H. Video slot option is \$99.00.

CeV Design, 11 Spring Street, Reading, MA 01867-2640, Tel: 617-942-0209, email: cev@shore.net or www.shore.net/~cev/cev.html

•AC•

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Picasso IV

Is it time to see the world of your Amiga in a little more depth and color? Picasso IV is the latest edition to Village Tronic's long-running graphics card.

By William Near

A New Contender

For a few years now most "big box" Amiga owners, AGA and ECS alike, have come to the conclusion that a 24-bit graphics board is far superior in performance to that of the Amiga's custom chips. Using an AGA Amiga in 256 colors is an exercise in frustration and patience. Manipulating large, colorful screens at anything other than an unusable crawl is not its forte, to say the least.

The latest contender in the Amiga 24-bit graphics board market is the Picasso IV from Village Tronic Marketing GmbH of Germany. Any Amiga with a Zorro II/III slot, a video slot, Workbench 3.1, and a 68020 or better CPU can join in on the fun.

Feature And Other Interesting Bits

The Picasso IV is based on the CL-GD5446 graphics chip by Cirrus Logic. While this chip is not one of the newer graphics chips from Cirrus Logic, it still serves its purpose quite nicely on the Amiga. There are 4 MBs of 64-bit, 50ns EDO video RAM on the card that enables it to run at a maximum 1280 x 1024 in TrueColor (24-bit) with a local PCI-Bus. This makes the Picasso IV quite a good performer.

Some other interesting features of this board are: S-VHS video input/outputs, 3.5mm stereo audio input/outputs, FLASHROM for future firmware updates via software, picture-in-picture (PIP) capability, Amiga and CD-ROM audio inputs,

and a 4 channel audio mixer on-board (Amiga, Line, TV, CD).

One of the biggest features of the Picasso IV is the built-in flicker fixer/scandoubler. This enables all standard Amiga screenmodes to be viewable on virtually any monitor. By standard Amiga screenmodes, I mean NTSC and PAL only — nothing else! The Picasso IV's flicker fixer will not pass-through any non-15 kHz.

screenmodes, double-NTSC/PAL is also out of the running.

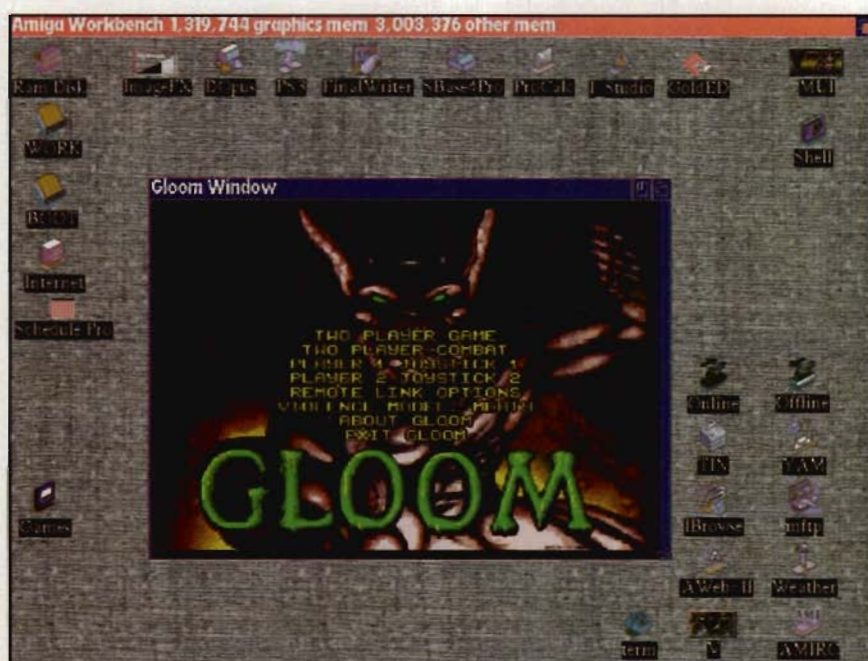
Some of the planned expansion modules for the Picasso IV are:

- a Video and TV-Module
- a digital Genlock for 100 Hz. TVs
- an MPEG module
- a Genlock module
- the Pablo II video-encoder
- a Sound module for MIDI-synthesizer, Wavetable, and Surroundsound
- an AudioDSP
- a 3D Accelerator

Installing & Hacking

Installing the board into your A3000 or A4000 is a very cut and dry procedure due to the in-line video slot. Installing the same board into an A2000, which I did, is quite an ordeal.

The first thing to do is remove all the monitor drivers from your system, except for the NTSC and PAL ones. All RTG software must be removed too. In my case that meant removing all of the CyberGraphX files left over from my Picasso II days. After doing this it is time to install the Picasso96 driver software using the standard Commo-



Care to play some Gloom Deluxe in a window on a 256 color Workbench?

In order to install the Picasso IV hardware into an Amiga 2000 you must first remove the flicker fixer module from the main card. According to the manual, this is simply a matter of cutting two plastic bridges that help to hold the two boards together — wrong!

I started out by following the procedure outlined in the manual. I cut through the two bridges with a very sharp knife and attempted to gently bend the flicker fixer module back and forth to set it free. I soon realized that this just wasn't going to happen as easily as the manual assured me that it would. Too much pressure on the main board and module would surely cause damage.

I had to saw through almost every connecting point between the module and main board (there are 31 of them) in order to feel confident that the module would release itself from the main board without going snap, crackle, and pop! About 45 minutes later I had two separate boards.

This is not a job for those with shaky hands or an uneasiness about using a sharp instrument around a computer board. If you don't feel confident doing this modification then I would suggest that you let your local Amiga dealer, or other computer repair center, do it for you. I'm not saying that it's a huge undertaking, but there's no sense in ruining a \$440 graphics board because you slipped with a knife or became too impatient to do the job right.

I recently read on the Picasso mailing list that the first 1,000 boards were not manufactured exactly as the prototype board was in regard to the flicker fixer's attachment points. It seems that this is the cause of the problem and it should be remedied in the next production run.



After removing the flicker fixer module from the main board, I placed the Picasso IV into an empty Zorro II slot and the flicker fixer module in the video slot. Three cables are then routed under the power supply to connect the two boards together.

All of this is unnecessary with other Amigas and most certainly could have been avoided if Village Tronic would have finished development on their Denise adapter board before releasing the Picasso IV. This adapter will enable A2000 owners to install the entire graphics board into a Zorro II slot and then run a cable from the board's flicker fixer to the Denise socket — no hacking required.

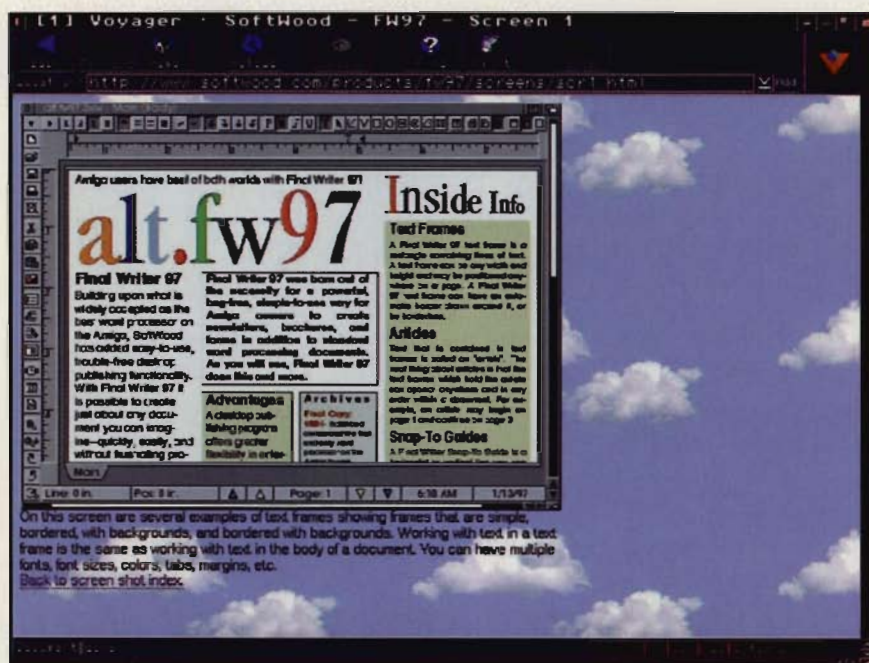
The Picasso IV comes with a nice, spiral-bound German manual and a plain, folded-and-stapled English version. Unlike the Picasso II's English manual, which was a nice piece of work and spiral-bound. It is as if the English manual was a last-minute effort in the binding and printing department. In fact, all early deliveries of the Picasso IV didn't even come with the English manual, but their users should have been sent the English version of the manual by now. Don't get me wrong, the English

manual uses proper grammar and spelling for the most part, unlike other translated manuals I have had the misfortune of using in the past.

Once all of the hardware and software is installed it's time to power up the computer and see what happens.

When first booting under the new system, a low-res screenmode is selected from the available modes. I promptly jumped into the Prefs/Screenmode program and brought up a nice 1024x768x256 Workbench screenmode on my 17" monitor. It looked quite nice on a large monitor. If you have never seen an Amiga running in a high resolution screenmode then it will be a sight for sore eyes, especially if you are used to the normal Amiga screenmodes. There is so much more screen real estate that you may just want to start leaving all your most used program's icons out on your new Workbench for easy access.

Screen updates, after opening or moving a window on Workbench, are so much faster than any non-graphics-board-Amiga that you will wonder how you ever got along without one. Even switching to a 1024x768x24-bit Workbench hardly slowed things



A Final Writer 97 screenshot viewed with VoyagerNG in 256 colors.

down. Yes, it was noticeable when compared to only 256 colors, but it is still just as fast or faster than a 16 color hi-res Workbench.

There is really nothing like running all of your favorite applications in high resolution and bit depth screenmodes. The number of screens you can have open at any one time is really only limited by the amount of RAM available to your system.

Of course, the higher the resolution and bit depth of your screen, the more RAM it eats. I can easily run Workbench (1024x768x256), DOpus 5.5 (640x480x256), and Final Writer 5 (800x600x256) at the same time with memory to spare. While connected to the Internet, I often run YAM (800x600x256), VoyagerNG (1280x1024x256), FFNews (1024x768x256), and AmIRC (800x600x256) at the same time.

I have limited VoyagerNG to 256 colors due to the amount of RAM needed to run it in 24-bit color. It would be fine if that's all I wanted to do while connected to the Internet. If you are used to viewing the WWW in 16 colors now, you won't believe your eyes when doing the same in 256 or even 16 million colors! Programs like PageStream and Final Writer will spring to full-color life when used on a high resolution screenmode.

Screen flipping with my middle-mouse-button is virtually instantaneous, but screen dragging is not available at this time. I actually don't miss screen dragging ever since moving to a graphics board a couple of years ago — I don't think you will either.

Benchmarking the Picasso IV against other Amigas, by using SysSpeed v2.2, shows just how much faster the graphics on the Amiga can be over a stock AGA machine and most modified Amigas too. You really don't need a benchmark to see the difference in real life use, though.

Tweaking The Drivers

Included in the Picasso96 software package is a program called PicassoMode, or you can use the improved PicassoModeTNG, for tweaking the board's output to get the most out of your monitor. I use a ViewSonic 17GS and I was able to alter the settings for the monitor driver to suit my monitor's capabilities.

With PicassoModeTNG you can set the minimum and maximum horizontal and vertical frequencies that your monitor is capable of, as well as the pixel clock, sync rates, etc. You can effectively tweak every available screenmode and create new ones too. Be warned, however, you can totally

fry your monitor if you don't know what you're doing!

Those who choose to play around with the presets, and I know a few people like this personally, will pay dearly for any great mistakes made in the settings. It's best to just set the software for your monitor's minimum and maximum horizontal and vertical sync rates and leave the rest to PicassoModeTNG.

You can also adjust the settings for the flicker fixer's output to minimize flicker on standard Amiga screenmodes. This sure beats the Picasso II/Flicker Free Video 2 combination that I used previously.

There are many included monitor settings for various models and more are available on the Picasso96 WWW site.

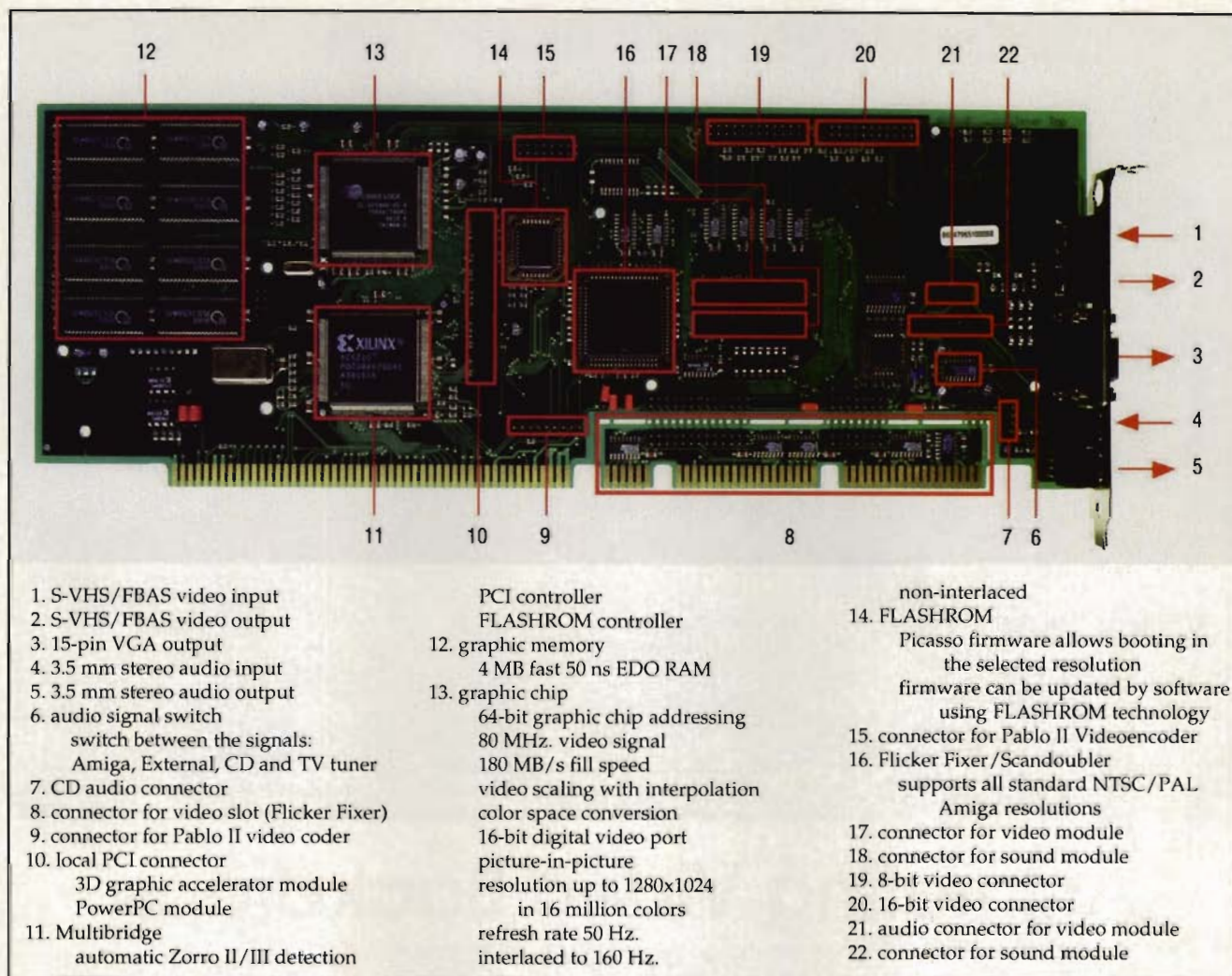
Compatibility

The Picasso96 software authors claim a high compatibility rate with CyberGraphX applications. I have found this to be true. All of my picture viewers and players still function under Picasso96 as they did under CyberGraphX. I haven't found anything that won't work, but I'm sure there may be a thing or two lurking out there that will break — nothing is 100% fool proof.

Users of ImageFX will notice that the program will lockup at times. The Picasso96 authors are aware of this problem and they are working on it. ImageFX will still work, but the occasional lockup is not unheard of under the new drivers. I have no doubt that this problem will be ironed out soon.

NewIcons support is top-notch, as long as you disable the RTG feature of NewIcons 3. This is a CyberGraphX-specific feature of NewIcons and it will cause problems when enabled under the Picasso96 drivers.

I have played Gloom Deluxe on both a Picasso 320x240 screenmode and in a window on my Workbench. The game is only a tad bit slow on the 320x240 screenmode when trying to play it at full screen, but jumping down one window size from within the game will make it fly. As long as you don't size the window too big on



your Workbench screen, the game is playable there too.

Speaking Of CyberGraphX

From what I have heard and read, the boys at CyberGraphX are willing to support the Picasso IV board if, and when, Village Tronic sends them a test board. To date, this has not happened. I would like to see CyberGraphX support for the Picasso IV, not due to any glaring deficiencies in the Picasso96 drivers, but a little competition can only be a good thing for the end-user.

Final Thoughts

There's one sure-fire way to breathe new life into your aging Amiga: buy a 24-bit graphics card! Your Amiga will seem like it's brand new once again, provided you have the CPU and RAM required.

The Picasso IV is one of the nicest 24-bit graphics boards available for the Amiga today. It has few faults, overall, and the Picasso96 software is under constant development. The authors of the drivers are available for answering question via Email and there's even a Picasso mailing list.

I would recommend this board over the competition mainly due to the on-board flicker fixer and planned modules. It would be nice if the board would just pass-through the non-15 kHz. screenmodes like my old flicker fixer did, and scan doubling the double-NTSC/PAL modes would have been a plus for AGA users too. Alas, it is not a perfect world and none of these things deter from the overall product quality that much.

I'm happy that I switched from my old graphics board/flicker fixer combination to the Picasso IV.

About The Author

William (Bill) Near has been a personal computer consultant for 7 years as well as 2 years as a contributing review author for Amiga Report.. When not working with the Amiga, Bill enjoys mountain bike riding, weight lifting, dirt bikes, music, watching old movies (especially Bogart), and satellite television.

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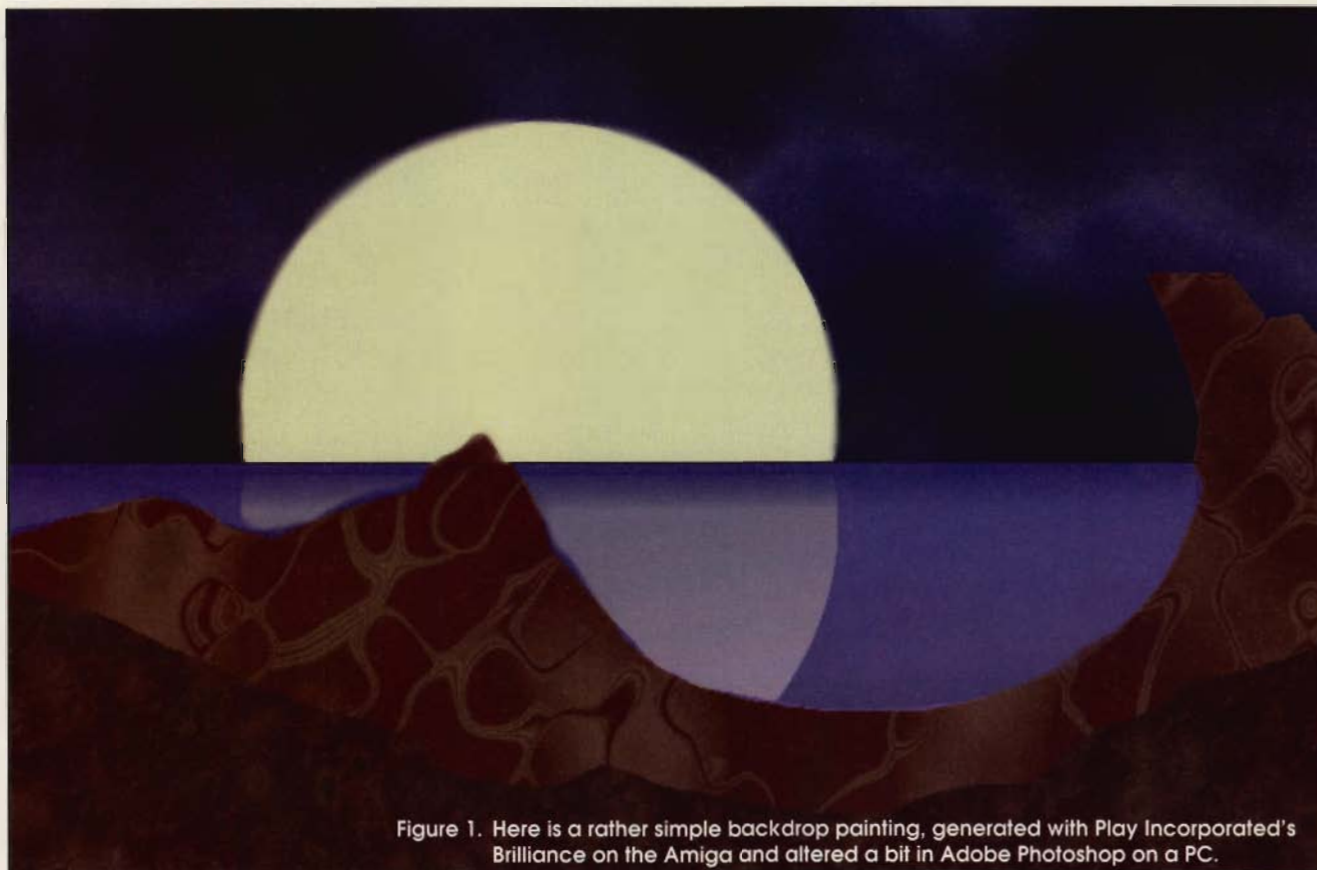


Figure 1. Here is a rather simple backdrop painting, generated with Play Incorporated's Brilliance on the Amiga and altered a bit in Adobe Photoshop on a PC.

Animating Video Backdrops

by R. Shamms Mortier

Use the Amiga and a few secrets to create sequences that rival those from the big boys.

When we think of an animation, we usually separate it into two components: foreground and background. This convention actually comes from filmmaking, where the actor is thought of as the central component, while everything else is considered to be the environment, the backdrop, against which the actor plays. A backdrop that is too busy or too attractive, can take away from the focus on the actor. That is the way the standard thinking goes. A newer school of thought, however, considers everything in the frame to be of one common thread, so that a backdrop can actually "speak" and what it says adds to our perception of who the actor is. Take a moment to think about this.

Think about the painting of the Mona Lisa. What would give you a hint about the depth of her personality? Her smile has always been our main focus. What if she were to evidence an animated frown, or perhaps a wide toothed grin? Certainly, that would alter our suspicion of who she is, of what she is capable of. But in our appreciation of the Mona Lisa, we relegate her environment to a secondary part of her personality, if a part at all. The fairly dreary backdrop she rests on however adds infinite coloring to her personality. It is the play of her smile against and WITH that backdrop that indicates the essence of what she is about. What if we were to make the backdrop sparkling and sunny? Can you

imagine that her smile would be appreciated in a wholly different context? It is not only our actor's person that speaks volumes of what an emotional impression is about, but how that person fits in or fights with their environment.

Modern animators, especially computer animators, often forget this. They are wrapped up in the fancy tricks that the actor (whether an animated humanoid, an alien, or even a logo) can do. Computer animators that come from a more painter oriented background however, are more prone to consider the stage against which the actor is placed as integral to defining the emotional, spiritual, and impressionist aspects of the story being told.

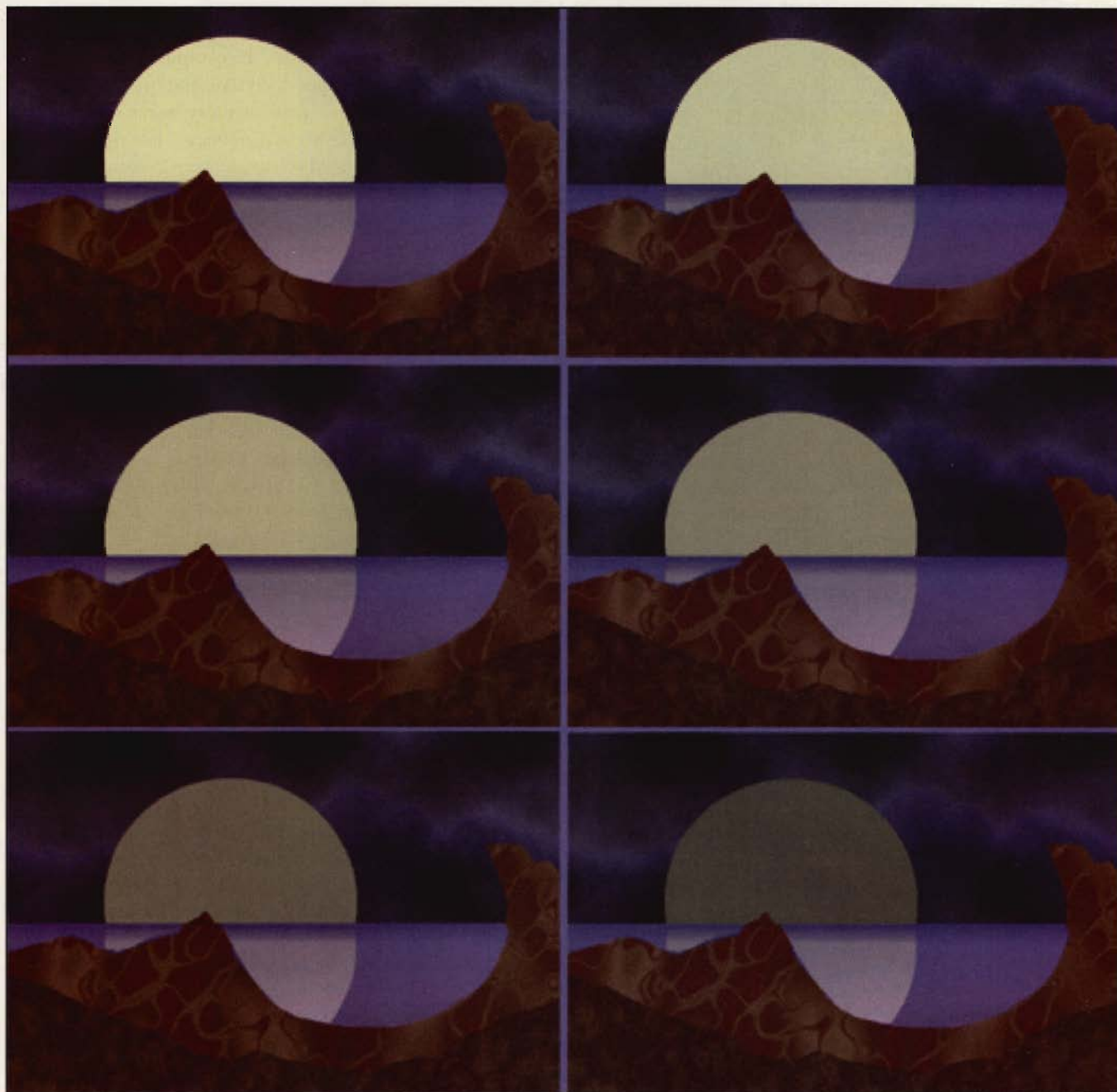


Figure 2. A basic way to animate this backdrop is to just alter the lightness and darkness of the "moon". This has little if any effect on playback speed, and can even be effective as far as audience attention. Sometimes just a little going on equals a lot going on. Certainly this has little effect in taking attention away from any foreground message placed over it, while adding some movement.

The Cost

Tedium is the constant enemy of the animator. Traditional animators were always considered special people because of their ability to struggle successfully against tedium. It is maddening to draw a figure over and over thousands of times, each time varying the movements just an iota or two. To say this task is tedious is minimizing the patience it takes.

Having done traditional animation on see-through tracing paper, I can attest to the tedium factor. A twenty minute animation can take a lone animator months if not years to accomplish. When you see the credits on a Disney animation, count the number of animators. Major animation productions often require dozens of individuals, each with their separate tasks and assignments. Designers, clothing experts, choreographers, limb

people, mouth movers, inkers, tweeners—all of these and more make up the combination of skills necessary in the telling of a good story.

Enter the computer, the advance against tedium. With the computer, I can design a keyframe of my subject in one orientation and then move the subject to the next major orientation, indicating that to be the next keyframe. I then give the computer a command to interpolate the movement and

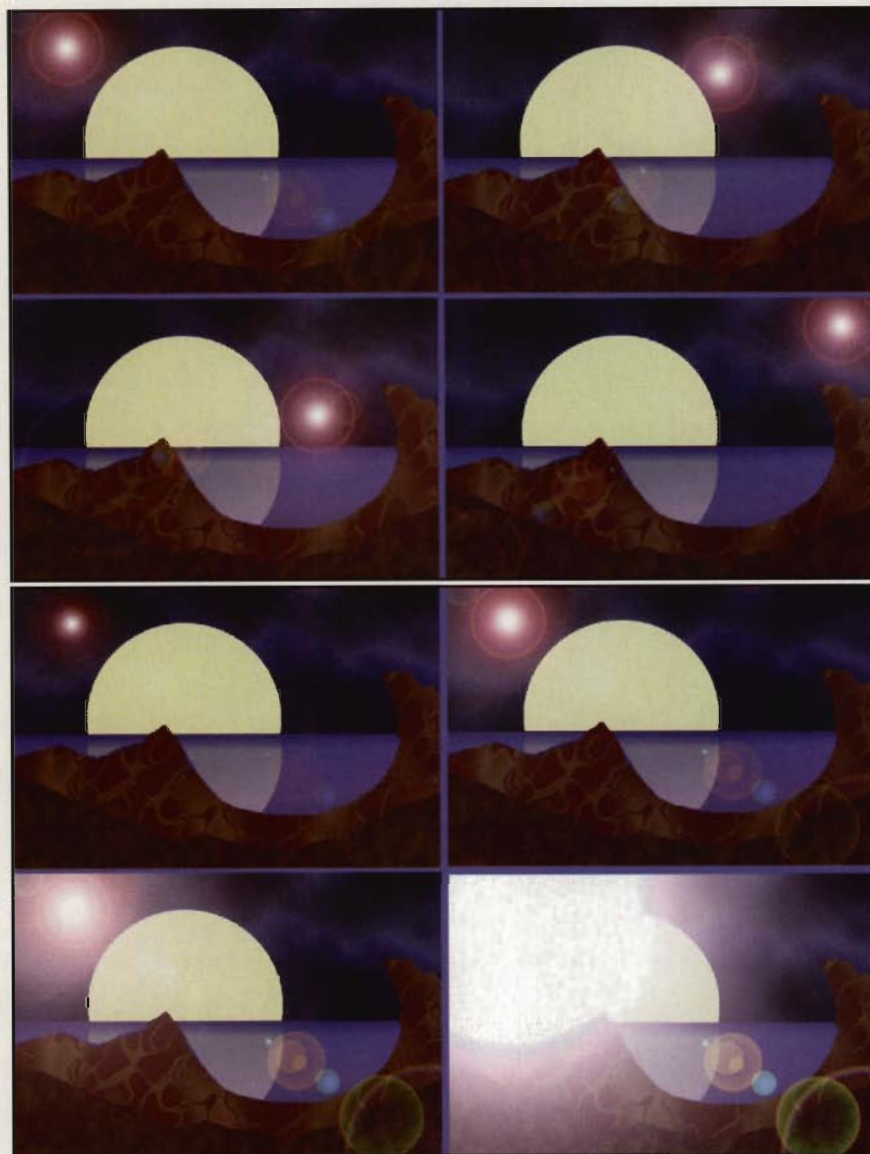


Figure 3 (Top). Another interesting effect is to add a moving lens flare. As long as the movement isn't too radical from frame to frame, playback isn't affected much. Remember, however, that lens flares also generate other cat effects on other parts of the image. Brighter flares can effect playback (and storage).

Figure 4 (Bottom). Although an animation like this might be tempting, this looping flare nova affects playback speed enormously. Too much is being affected.

everything else in the scene (how textures are affected, camera movements, lighting, and more). The computer figures out all of the in-between frames and (as fast as its accelerated memory will allow) generates all of the frames that take me from keyframe one to keyframe two. Meanwhile, I am in the refrigerator making a thick sandwich, or outside walking the dog. When I return, everything is in order. I have yet to see a note from the computer complaining about the tedium of it all.

But nothing is free. If my animation has a lot of changes going on in every frame, so that half or more of the pixels in the frame are changing from one frame to the next, I pay a price. On the average non-flyer Amiga system, there are only two ways to achieve a decent playback speed when there is a lot of change going on from frame to frame. One is to keep the frame sizes small, taking up no more than 1/2 of the screen. The other is to own (or lease) a single frame recorder, so that each frame is set down on tape individually, and the final playback

frame rate is in the hands of a playback device, not the computer. Movie storage, as well as the speed of playback, costs memory, and memory (RAM) costs money. Then there's the speed of your system to consider (more money for faster systems).

On a NewTek Flyer system it is possible to record your entire animation or sequence to a fast hard drive and then replay the scene in real time. However, this does require the full advanced system with approved AV hard drives. Although the prices of these systems are becoming more and more affordable and every animator should soon have one, the idea of a stable backdrop will only improve your work either Flyer based or on a standard Amiga.

Consequently, returning to our original theme of changing backdrops, computer animators usually keep the backdrop changes fairly minimized, unless they have access to extensive, expensive options. Certainly the typical home animator is always making these trade-off choices. What is called "multimedia" by the non-Amiga crowd is really a buzz word for "smaller screen sizes are OK". Look at the size and the mostly jumpy and slow playback rate of an animation on a standard PC multimedia CD-ROM. It usually takes up no more than a third of the screen. The same and worse is true for animations that play on the Web. Standard GIF animations on the Web are just thumbnail size.

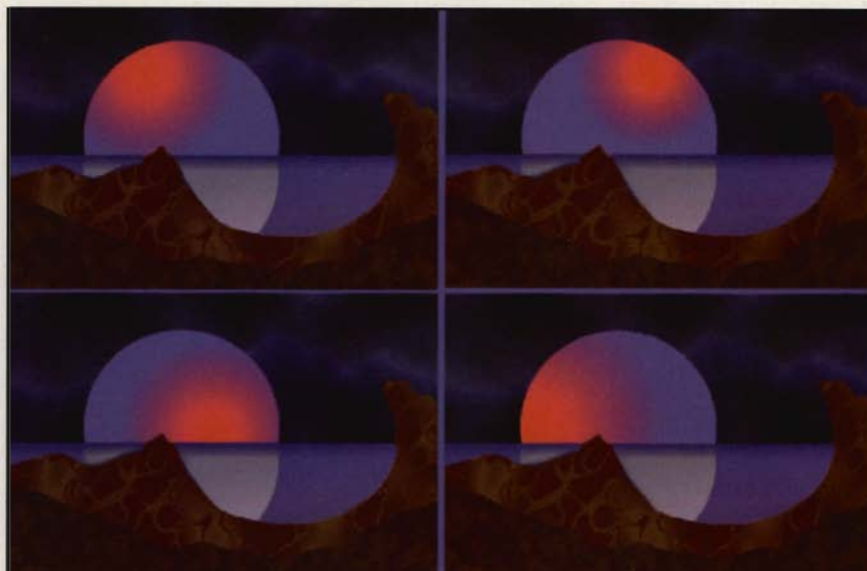
Most of this is in the realm of evolution and change, thanks to new mega-processors being developed. It will be a while, however, before this effects the home animator, or even the small to medium sized animation houses.

Animating backdrops thoughts

There are some ways to get around the limitations placed upon the animation of a whole backdrop frame. If you look at TV animations (always a good source for what is going on at the high end, as long as you can stomach the puerile messages), you can see that a number of them allow the central actor or logo to remain stable while the backdrop changes.

Figure 5 (Top Right). Here's a neat trick. It affects the moon just like lightening-darkening, but is much more interesting. A radial gradient is applied to the moon in each frame, and its center moved a bit. Though only the moon is animated, the color changes are alluring enough to be attractive even in a repetitive loop.

Figure 6 (Bottom Right). This is a two frame looping animation that produces a radical strobe effect. I find it both hypnotic and annoying, but it may have its uses. It involves making first the top and then the bottom half of the image inverted (negative). The result is a flashing playback. If I were to use this, I wouldn't let it last more than three or four seconds.



Sometimes these changes often have a repetitive nature. Like other things we have mentioned so far, the film industry actually set the tone for some versions of this technique long ago. Computer animators and their traditional technical ancestors know it as "looping".

A loop is just that, a repeatable action. Have you ever seen scenery loop in the background in an old movie or cartoon? My animation teacher used to say that most loops are good for two go-arounds before the audience catches on and the magic is ruined. When you see the same tree go by ten times, it is hard to believe that the cowboy is riding the horse. The challenge is to make a loop interesting if you are going to use it at all. On the up side, looped backdrop animations do not take up a whole lot of disk space, and if you keep some things in mind, they can commence without altering playback speed in too-damaging ways either.

Playback speed on a standard system is affected when more than about 30% of a frame changes from its predecessor (unless of course you are recording to a single frame device or on a NewTek Flyer system). This adds another challenge to the animator who is seeking to attain a believable frame rate while animating a backdrop.

The rules (sort of)

So, trying to lay down some basic principles to consider if you want to animate a full-screen backdrop in your



animation, here are some suggested things to think about. No rule works in

all cases, but options are always worth knowing about.



Figure 7 (Top Left). Something not covered in the article is Alpha Compositing. Nova's ImageFX is great when it comes to this option. It requires that a portion of the image become transparent, so that another animation (or in the case of the NewTek Toaster, a live video sequence) can be composited within the scene. If the Toaster is used, playback speed is not affected. If an animation is composited for IFF playback, the small area involved has little effect on playback speed, while a high degree of interest ("how did they do that?") is included.

Figure 8 (Bottom Left). Even though the actor, in this case the lettering, doesn't move a bit, an Alpha Composited backdrop animation works as an attention getter.

5. Consider animating multiple small portions (even tiny portions) of the backdrop instead of just one larger portion. This also elongates the viewer's attention span.
6. If your livelihood is dependent upon the animations you generate, save up for a Flyer system or even a single frame recorder. This allows you to animate everything in a scene without paying dues in playback speed.

Amiga has the final word

If you have experience with the Mac and/or PC in addition to the Amiga, I'll bet your admiration for the Amiga's animation tools and playback capacities have grown tremendously. An Amiga with four or eight megabytes of RAM can do what Macs and PCs can accomplish with 32 or more megabytes. The Amiga was designed as an animation playback engine, and IFF animations still far outstrip what non-accelerated Macs and PCs can accommodate with QuickTime or AVI movies. This is changing as the technology rushes along, but not so fast as to erase the grin from an Amiga animator's face.

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1. Animate only a portion of the backdrop.
2. Make your animated looped elements as interesting as possible, so the audience can stand (in fact, can't wait) to see it loop again.
3. The less frames in a loop, the more (generally) that has to be going on, so that the audience's attention isn't just waiting to see the same "tree" come around again.
4. If just a small portion of the backdrop is being animated, don't neglect making the rest of the backdrop interesting as well. This helps to draw attention away from the loop.

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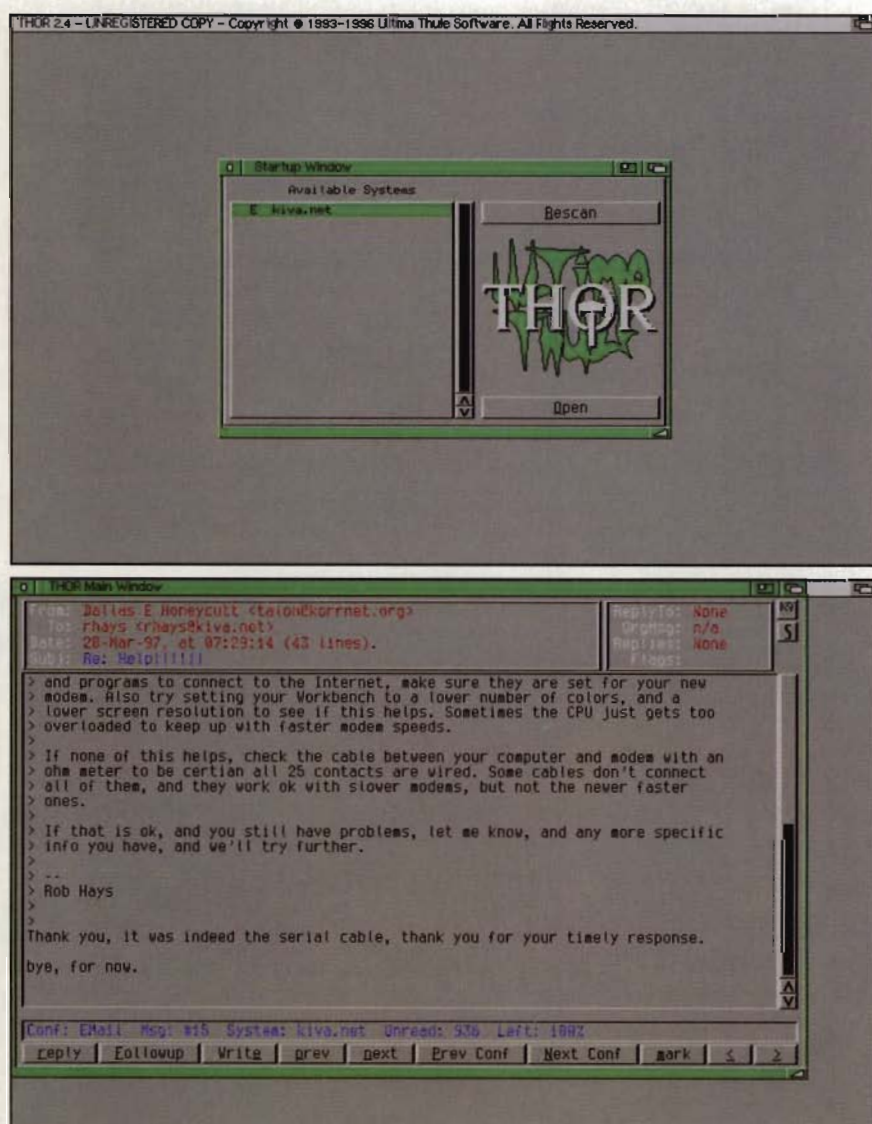
on line

amiga telecommunications

by
Rob
Hays



While THOR is just the god of thunder, rain, and farming of Scandinavian mythology, he is one powerful multi-talented program for Amiga net surfers.



This month we will finish up our look at Amiga e-mail programs, begin looking at news reader programs, and talk about a program so diverse that it has its own sub-directory on Aminet. All of this will be accomplished by talking about only one program.

THOR

From Ultima Thule Software, THOR (Figure 1) is one of those programs that its users either swear at, or swear by. As I said above, it not only handles e-mail, but it also functions as a Usenet news groups reader. Not limited to Internet use through a TCP/IP stack, THOR also supports nine different BBS system messaging formats, including FIDO and QWK.

THOR consists of three main units. The ConfigTHOR unit is used in your initial set up to load user ID and password info, as well as paths to files and directories. You can also set various display options in ConfigTHOR.

The main THOR module is where you will spend most of your time. This contains the message reading window (Figure 2), as well as menu items for the control of THOR's actions. From here you can join or cancel the various conferences available on the specific system with which you are working. As far as THOR is concerned, a conference can be anything from e-

Figure 1 (Top). Choose which system you are connected to.
Figure 2 (Bottom). THOR's main window.

Because of its large and comprehensive nature, THOR can be complex to configure and learn. But, with some patience and a thorough reading of the documentation files, you might find yourself swearing by, rather than at, THOR.

mail, a news group, or a message area on a BBS (Figure 3). The buttons along the bottom of the main window give you quick access to navigation functions, and various ways to respond to the current message.

The third section, ConnectTHOR, can be called from the main window under the External menu item, or run on its own (Figure 4). This module handles the "dirty work" of communicating with your selected system. A row of buttons across the top of this window allows you to configure your TCP/IP parameters, get new mail or news, start a news browser, or send events to your system. This last one will send your e-mail replies, newsgroup postings, update your conference choices, etc.

In the e-mail area, THOR will handle standard ASCII messages, and MIME (Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions). It has internal decoding for the two most prevalent forms of encoding MIME, base 64, and quoted-printable. All messages are added to a database, so subject threads can be followed forward or backward. For writing messages, you can choose either the internal editor, or use your favorite external one.

And Now For The News

News reader programs all have some common aspects, just as all of the mail reader programs do. First, you will have to get some information from your Internet Service Provider. You will need to know the name of your news server, just as you needed to know the mail server for the e-mail programs.

Unlike mail programs, generally news programs use fairly large amounts of hard disk space. This is because of the large numbers of news groups to choose from, as well as the

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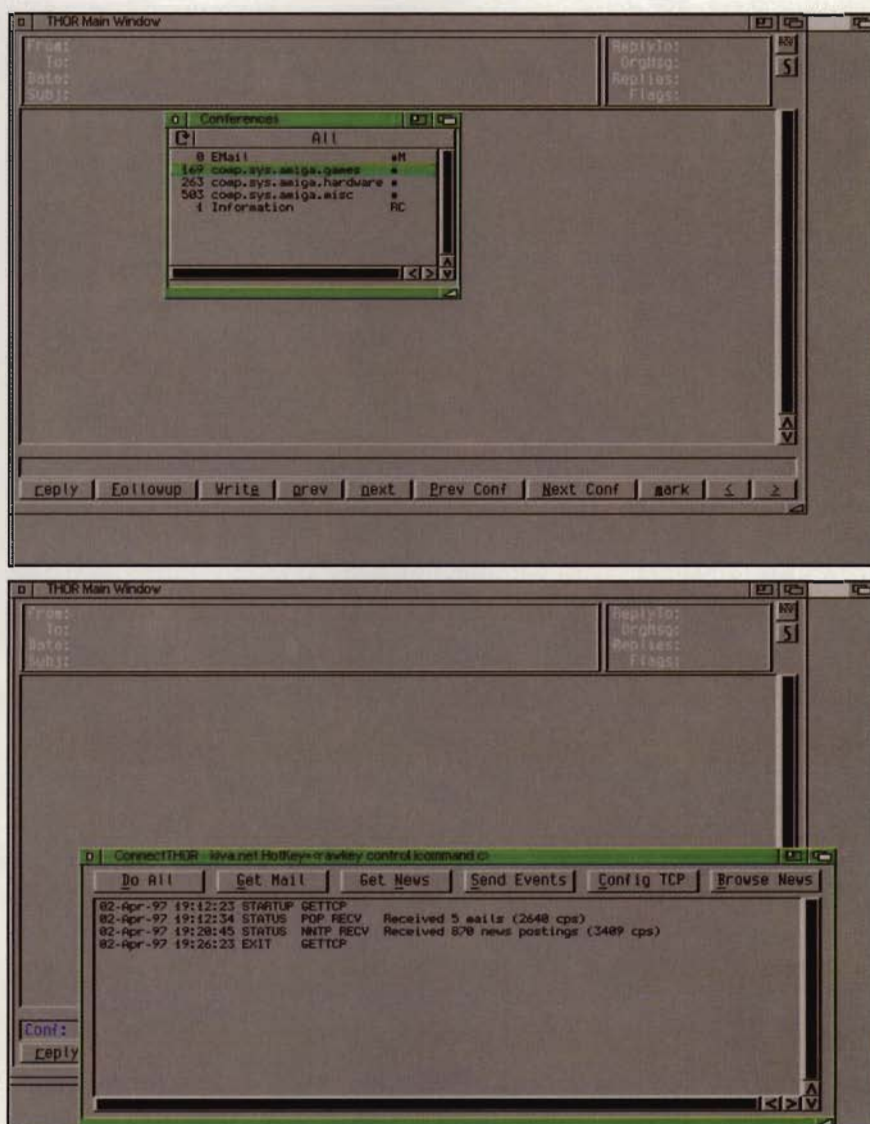


Figure 3 (Top). It's easy to see what my interests are.
Figure 4 (Bottom). Easy Net communications.

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relatively large size of most news articles. If you subscribe to more than just a few news groups, or don't check for new messages every day, you will soon be wishing for a larger capacity hard drive. This is especially true if you subscribe to binary groups that include large files attached to the messages.

The first step after setting up a news reader with your account information, is to download a list of available news groups from your news server. Depending on how complete your server's list is, and how fast your connection is, this could take anywhere from a few minutes on up. The good part is you only have to do this once. After this is done, you typically

can choose from a listing of the news groups which ones you wish to subscribe to. The next time you are on line, the program will download the headers, which usually show the subject of the message and the sender's name. Now you go through this list picking the articles you want to read, and the program will download the complete articles and display them one at a time.

While this basic process remains the same from program to program, the specifics will change. With THOR, you must first select the menu item Event Commands/Get Conflist from the main window. This tells THOR to get a listing of available conferences/newsgroups the next time you log onto your ISP. Then from the ConnectTHOR module click on the Send Events button.

After this is done, you can see a listing of all available news groups by selecting the Event Commands/Join Conf menu item (Figure 5). This list supports multiple selections by holding the Shift key, or click on the Search button to do a keyword search (Figure 6).

The next time you are connected, use the Send Events button again, and you will be subscribed to your favorite newsgroups. Now if you click on Do All or Get News in the ConnectTHOR window, your ISP will send you the new postings since your last visit.

To choose individual messages to read, in the main THOR window select the Windows/Conflist menu and you will see a list of available newsgroups. Select one and then select the Windows/Msglist menu item to see a listing of message headers. Double-click on a header, and the full message will open in the main window (Figure 7). You can also choose to use the Browse News button on the ConnectTHOR module if you prefer (Figure 8).

Because of its large and comprehensive nature, THOR can be complex to configure and learn. But, with some patience and a thorough reading of the documentation files, you might find yourself swearing by, rather than at, THOR.

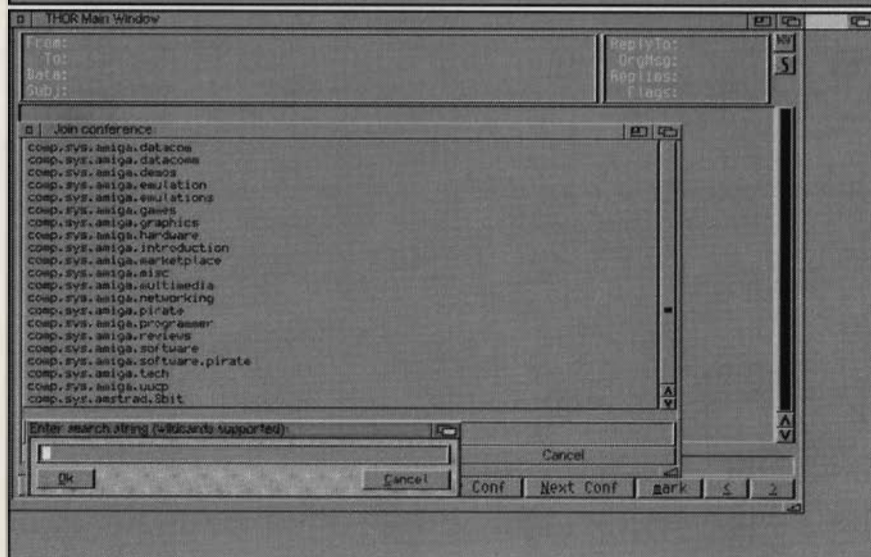
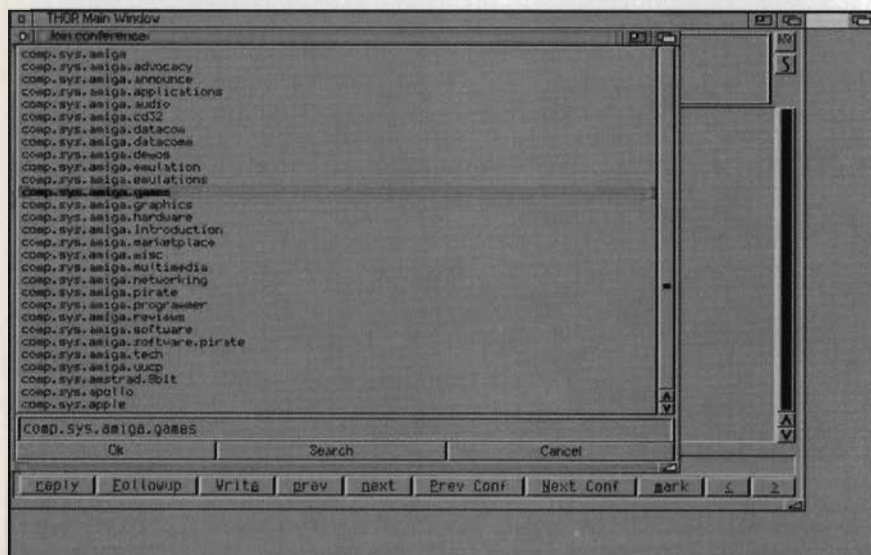


Figure 5. Pick a group. Any group.

Figure 6. Can't remember the exact name?

To use THOR through an Internet account, you will need two files from the AmiNet directory comm/thor; thor24_main.lha, which is 837,359 bytes, and thor24_inet.lha, which is 229,376 bytes. Unarchive the main file first, and use the Installer script to install it. Then unarchive the inet file, and follow the directions in the readme text file.

This same subdirectory on AmiNet has many other programs and scripts for use with THOR, be sure to check them out. THOR is currently at version 2.4, and is shareware with a fee of US\$30.

Where To Find Me

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rhays@amigazone.com
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For U.S.Mail:

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If you run an Amiga specific BBS, send me the information callers will need to access your system. Phone number(s), modem speeds, software settings, etc. As a service to the Amiga community I will include the information I receive in this column from time to time.

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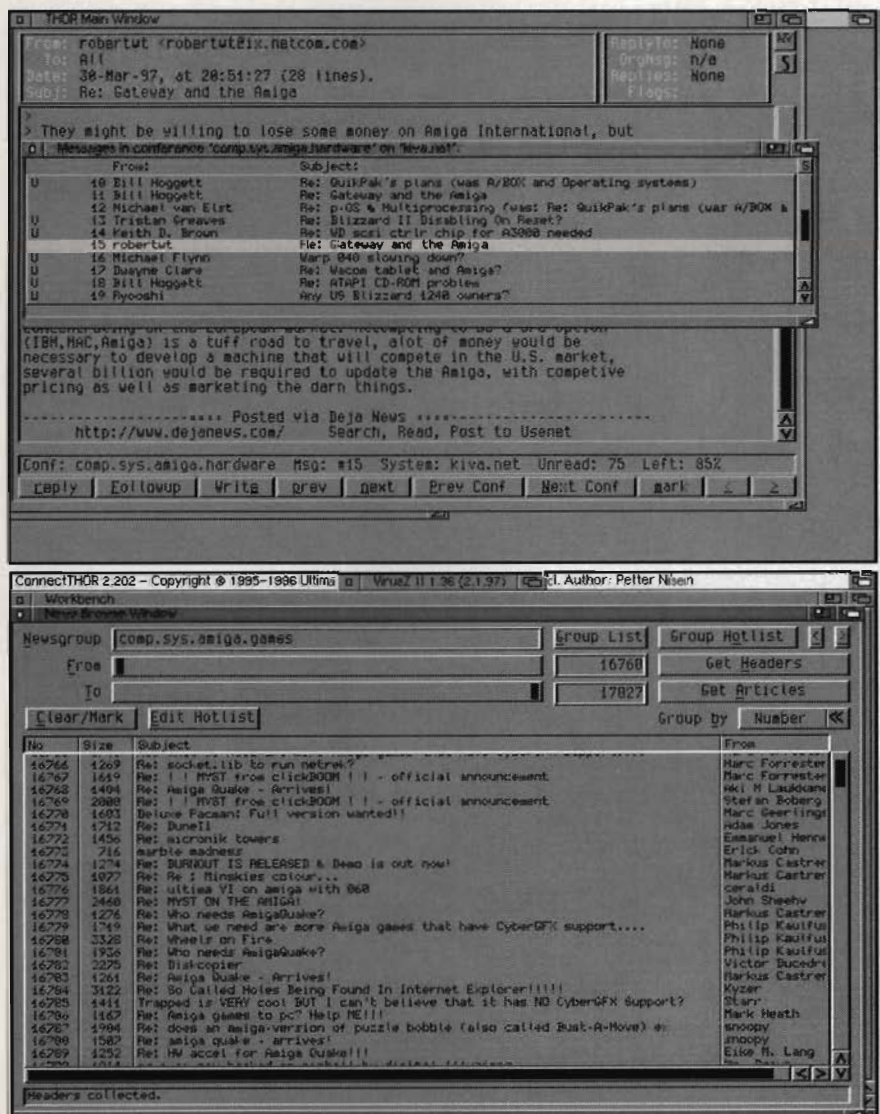


Figure 7. Have you read the news today?

•AC• Figure 8. With THOR, there's more than one way.

Final Writer 97

If you compose your prose, SoftWood has created a new version of their popular word processing software designed to make your muse cruise.

By R. Shamms Mortier

SoftWood is at it again, making an excellent Amiga word processor even better. Instead of resting on their laurels, SoftWood persists at adding very high end features to Final Writer with each upgrade. This incarnation, Final Writer 97, pushes the state-of-the-art of Amiga word processors another step or two ahead.

Installation

If you have kept up with the Final Writer upgrades and have version 5 installed, upgrading to Final Writer 97 should take you about a minute. I was afraid at first that I would have to search for my version 5 disks (all 9 of them), but it turned out that Final Writer 97's two disk shipment (a new disk 1 and 8) was all that was required.

If you are installing Final Writer 97 over an older Final Writer version, or installing from scratch, you will have to have other disk sets handy.

Text Frames

OK. The mashed potatoes first. Text Frames is a feature normally found on high end DTP applications like PageMaker for IBM and Mac. Now Final Writer boasts text frames. Text frames can be moved anywhere on a page, and include the same text runaround options as graphics. Final Writer's Text Frames can also be colored inside, as well as having borders rendered in your choice of colors and widths. Text Frames can also be borderless.

Resizing a Text Frame is a snap. Just use the selection arrow to activate the frame, then grab a corner handle, and resize. You can make it any width or height you want.

Text Frames can even be split up so that the internal text continues on another page. Text is split by first manipulating a "Split Handle", and then clicking the mouse on the targeted page. Text Frames respond as easily as a graphic when you move them.

Snap-to Guides

Just like the most well known DTP applications, Final Writer 97 now offers snap-to's, allowing you to align and balance the elements on a page, or even in the whole document. Snap-to Guides can be placed on the page any number of times you desire, and act as great layout tools for configuring the look of a document. Simply click on a page ruler and drag-drop a guide into

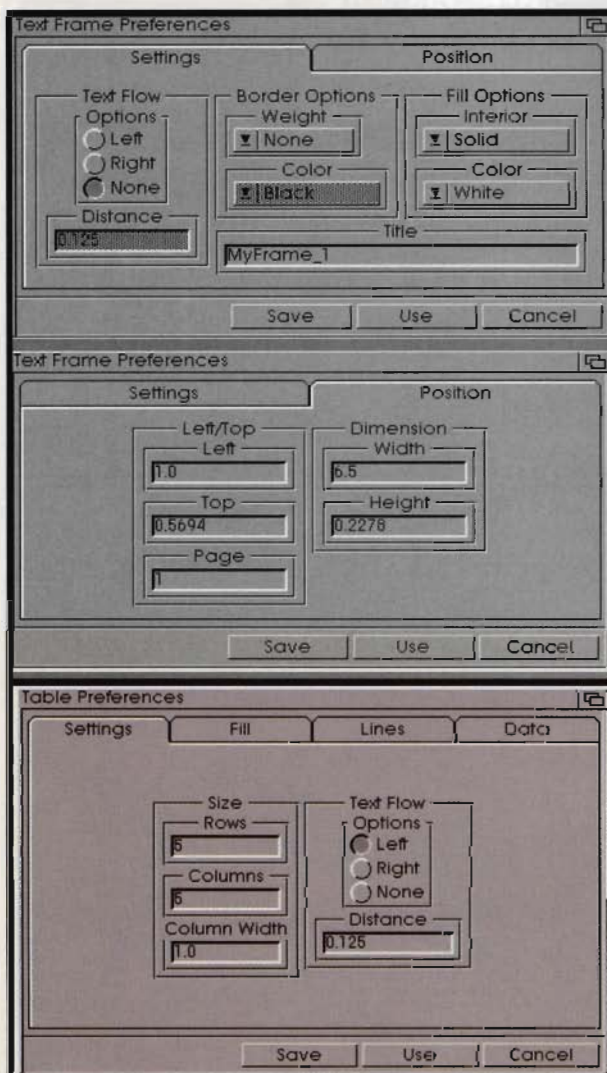


Figure 1. Here are the two Preference Tabs for the Frames option in Final Writer 97.

Figure 2. Table Preferences.

JUNE 1997 31

SOFT SHADOWS

To satisfy your thirst for a mystical look of soft shadows in your graphics and text does not require a large bite of effort, just a little reflection.

by Nick Cook

Placing shadows under text and objects has long been employed in publishing to add a third dimension to the two dimensional page. Soft shadows are the new rage, not only in desktop publishing but web publishing as well. Instead of a knife-sharp shadow, the edge is fuzzy.

You can use two basic methods to create soft shadows. One, just blur the shadow text or object, or two, stack layers of lighter to darker gray text or

objects (see *Amazing Amiga*, January 1997, for a tutorial on stacking objects).

Just Blur It, Blur It For Text

STEP ONE: Set your text. In a word processor, structured drawing or desktop publishing program, "print" the file as an IFF. If you use a paint or image processing program, watch for proper character "kerning" (see sidebar).

You will need two copies of the text. Fill one with whatever color you want. The second copy is the shadow and, logically enough, should be filled with black.

STEP TWO: Load the shadow text graphic in your image processing program and apply the blur filter. Save the result under a different file name in case something goes wrong or you don't like the result.

STEP THREE: In your image processing or paint program, compose the images from Step Two with the headline text (Figure 1). Save this last image under a unique name.

STEP FOUR: Import the combined image into your word processing or desktop publishing program.

For Objects

STEP ONE: Import the picture into your paint program.

STEP TWO: Select black or a dark grey color and a large brush. Draw a line just under the object. If you don't trust your hand dexterity or steadiness, draw the line elsewhere on the screen. Pick up the line as a brush, then position it under the object. Save this image under a different name (Figure 2).

Another way to make the shadow is to outline and fill the object with dark grey or black. Simple enough

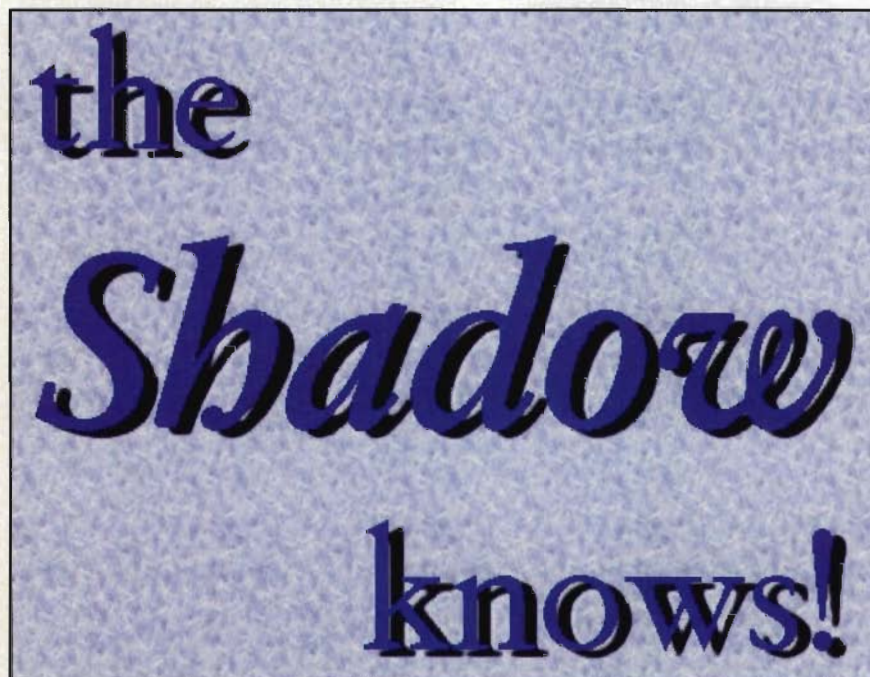


Figure 1: The text and shadow were separate IFF images. The shadow was blurred in SoftLogik's BME.



Figure 2: The shadow was added to the original image (top) by drawing a line under the pen, blurring that area and combining both pictures (bottom).

when the object is a basic shape, such as a rectangle (Figure 3).

If your paint program offers different "media" brushes, you may be able to skip Step Three. For instance, a "crayon" or "charcoal" brush may already resemble a soft shadow line because of a feathered edge. Fiddling with the brush's transparency may lighten the line enough to pass it off as a shadow.

STEP THREE: Load the picture from Step Two into an image processing program. If the program can operate on a selected area (for example, SoftLogik's BME), blur the portion of the picture surrounding the shadow line. Save the results. If your program doesn't permit area isolation, you may want to "erase" (i.e., use the background to paint out) the top part of the object in the paint program before saving it in Step Three.

STEP FOUR: Compose the image from Step Two on top of the image from Step Three. Import the combined image into your word processing or desktop publishing program.

Just Stack It, Stack It

Stacking lighter layers of grey text or objects also builds soft shadows. Using PageStream 3, for instance:

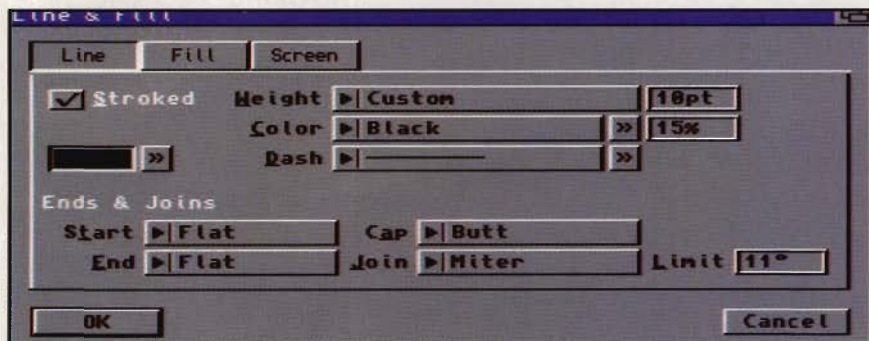


Figure 4: Knit one, purl two; or in this case, increase the outline by two points, decrease percentage of grey by 5.



Figure 3: The ruler (top) was outlined, filled and blurred (middle) as a shadow. The two images were then composited together (bottom).

For Text

STEP ONE: Enter the text. Click on the arrow icon, then on the text object.

STEP TWO: Duplicate the object.

STEP THREE: Click on the text icon, then highlight the duplicated text.

STEP FOUR: Go to the "Line & Fill" requester in the "Type" menu (Figure 4). Set the Line Stroke (width) to 2 points, and the Fill to 60 or 80% of black. Set the Fill for the character to the same value as the Line Stroke fill. Accept the changes.

STEP FIVE: Repeat Steps Two, Three and Four, except increase the Line Stroke by 2 points and decrease the Fill percentage by 5 in Step Four. Keep duplicating and changing the line width and fill each time until the latter stands at 10 or 15% (Figure 5).

STEP SIX: Stack the text objects.

Start with the lightest gray on the bottom and end with the original text on top. Offset the original slightly above and to the left of the shadow group. Select all the objects (in "Edit" menu) and group.

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Figure 5: The different stages of shadow layers from the original (top left) to final transformation (bottom right).

For Objects

The same procedure used for text works for structured objects. Draw a rough, filled outline of the object, then duplicate. Follow Steps Four, Five and

Six, except use the "Line & Fill" requester in the "Object" menu (Figure 6).

•AC•

Please Write to:
Nick Cook
c/o Amazing Computing
P.O. Box 2140
Fall River, MA 02722-2140



Figure 6: The plaque shadow was also created by stacking the rounded-edge rectangles.

Isn't Kern A County In California?

"Kerning" means the space between characters. Compare the two sentences in the graphic above. The top one is output from PageStream3; the bottom one comes from DeluxePaintV. Notice how odd the spacing looks between the bottom "Y" and "o"?

Letter combinations shouldn't appear to be mashed together or acres apart. Desktop publishing programs and some word processing programs use "pair kerns," built into the fonts, which describe the spacing of various letter combinations; for example, an "o" should slip under the bar of a "T."

Paint programs may not pay attention to this information, and usually just slap down one letter after the other. Your eye is the best judge of kerning. If the kerning looks "off," it is. Pick up the letter as a brush and shift it over.

•AC•

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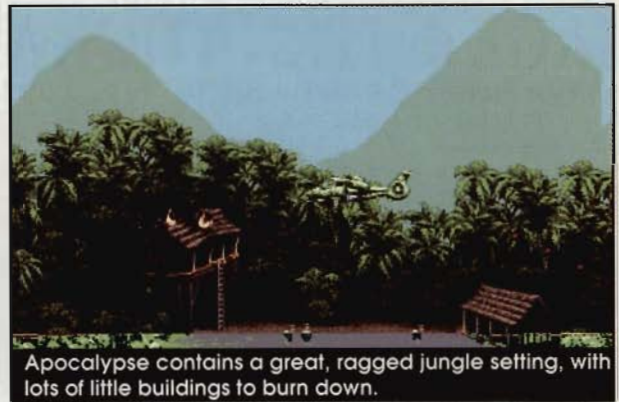
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GAMES ON THE AMIGA

By Peter Olafson



I'm getting rid of my Amiga games.

This is a strange admission with which to begin my first Amiga games column for *AC*, and it has already sponsored some dark fantasies. (In my mind's eye, I see approaching torches and hear distant calls for rope.) But it got your attention, I see, and it's true.

I have — actually, had — *thousands* of Amiga games. I used to be games editor for *Amiga World*. In that capacity, I looked at everything I could persuade game publishers to send me and used my own resources to round up everything else.

CD32.) After all, by then, the Amiga had been out of production for almost a year. But I wasn't. It took about a year — call it mourning, if you like — to reach the liberating recognition that I no longer had to maintain my vast collection. Finally, last spring, I found myself downsizing.

The shareware/PD stuff went easily. I just threw it all out on a snowy day in March. AmiNet has effectively become the sole source for new Amiga shareware games — replacing the faltering online services — and its web

hear the Gregorian chants at the temples. Zack McCracken and the *Alien Mindbenders* is the only computer game I have ever persuaded my then-girlfriend (now wife) to play.

I eventually tricked myself into parting with a few, then a few more, then a few more. I set up rules. I would keep anything I liked the look of. No, I would keep anything I might conceivably play. No, I would keep only things I definitely wanted to play. No, I would keep anything I meant to finish.

It worked. I put an ad in comp.sys.amiga.marketplace, and my collection scattered across the globe. The impossibly rare *Great Giana Sisters* went off to a fellow in England. *Monkey Business* (the first Amiga game) and the free-scrolling RPG *Ambermoon* went to Australia. Virtually everything from Infocom went to a fellow in Japan.

Eventually, this process slowed down. If I put a game on the for-sale list one day, I took it off the next. After all, I didn't want to abandon the Amiga. (Now, that would have been traumatic.) I just wanted to reduce this formidable stack to the point of manageability. And I have. Aside from stuff I am actively reviewing, my collection is down to about two dozen games.

These survivors are an interesting bunch. If you had asked me a year ago which ones I would keep, I don't think

The impossibly rare *Great Giana Sisters* went off to a fellow in England. *Monkey Business* (the first Amiga game) and the free-scrolling RPG *Ambermoon* went to Australia.

The result was the world's largest private Amiga game collection. The disks ... well, the disks were everywhere. I couldn't escape them. I couldn't move without knocking them over. The docs alone took up seven three-foot wide shelves and were packed so tightly that periodically a few would pop out and flutter to the floor, like a plant trying to spread its seeds.

I suppose I should have been prepared when *Amiga World* went under in 1995. (I was right in the middle of a review of *Lilil Divil* for the

pages are a few clicks away. So what did I need to keep?

The commercial games were another matter. Getting rid of some of them made me ... uncomfortable. After all, I have had Amigas since June 1987 — as many as seven at one point — and some of my games had acquired the cache of old family snapshots.

Before I quit to write full-time about games, I ran leagues on *Earl Weaver Baseball* at my newspaper for three years. My classical music-loving parents came to visit, and I showed them *The Bard's Tale* so they could

I would have named many of them. But these remainders are the ones that have exerted (and continue to exert) some sort of hold over me. I can't see getting rid of them.

Alien Breed 3D II: The Killing Grounds (Team 17):

Alien Breed 3D II has taken some hits over playability as well as for speed and general bugginess. Even if you have finished the original AB3D, playing the follow-up is like working at a job for which you are not remotely qualified. The AMOS-based editor released with the game was a mess (incredibly, a whole disk's worth of files were missing) and an intimidating tool kit even after the missing files were supplied via a patch a few weeks later. It is a small wonder that, to date, only a single user-created level has been uploaded to AmiNet.

But, this queen of Doom clones has a resilience that allows it to rise above individual complaints. It is not Quake but it is at least the equal of Doom. And, on a few key points, it is superior—story-telling, for instance.

Doom tosses up a screen of text when you finish an episode. It is almost an afterthought. It could say anything. AB3D2 offers up a screen of moody text as you enter each level and, occasionally, at the base of the display as you explore. This may seem a minor point, but it gives the game a consistent voice and the voice gives the game a persistent sense of place—something in very short supply in 3D action games. It is not just a room; it's "Quarantine." It is not just a space-craft; it is the battle cruiser Indomitable, which picked you up after AB3D, and now is disturbingly empty and dark.

Well, the Indomitable is empty of friendly troops. However, it seems extraordinarily well-supplied in ravenous red dogs and Space Hulk-like troopers. These troopers dissolve in uniform (but satisfying) splatters of green muck when targeted with your double-barreled shotgun and less-damaging but faster-firing blaster (the first of the weapons you will find).



Cadaver is a dense, glossy puzzle/adventure of action, object inventory, and mystery.

Alien Breed 3D II is also hard — *very* hard. The first level is more or less a get-acquainted walk. The second level is the lowest ring of hell. I was running, retreating, sandwiched and overmatched for the first five minutes. When I finally beat back the assault, and took a deep breath, I quietly dropped into a trench (empty) and made for the stairs (also empty).

Then something turned the corner ahead of me — something big — and

Breed 3D II became a little too real. It has a way of doing that. Little things, the smallest details, add uneasily to the realism. Such as its ability to provide different sounds for footsteps on different surfaces and the noise of your enemies walking nearby.

Actually, I like the high difficulty: The save routine — only at level's end — gives AB3D2 a splendidly long life. When you always have a save from the last dark corner, you can afford to

I was running, retreating, sandwiched and overmatched for the first five minutes. When I finally beat back the assault, and took a deep breath, I quietly dropped into a trench (empty) and made for the stairs (also empty).

turned its lights on me. I was spooked but good. It reminded me of the scene in John Carpenter's "Prince of Darkness" in which the devil emerges from his prison — lighted from behind so the audience is unable to make out the details. Of course, these cinematic analogies did not occur to me until afterward. I just ran. And I don't run easily. Chase me, OK. Shoot at me, fine. You are just a big sprite, and I can turn you off.

But at that moment, I felt like nothing so much as a moth dancing helpless before a flame and Alien

experiment. When you know a mistake is going to cost you 30 minutes, you are more cautious. You play as if it is a matter of life and death, and so you should. Happily, AB3D2 adopts a conventional saved game structure, rather than the passcode system used in AB3D.

Notes: Unhappily, Alien Breed 3D II is probably the last in the six-game Alien Breed line. Team 17 recently released the AB3D2 source code via its web site, which would seem to signify an effective throwing up of the hands. (The publisher has no concrete plans



Cannon Fodder 2 adds the odd twist and an absolutely cutthroat difficulty level.

for Amiga games after the Worms: The Directors Cut.)

Apocalypse (Virgin):

Choplifter was one of the first constructive shoot-em-ups. You were not simply blowing things up: You were blowing things up, taking on POWs, and shuttling them to safety. Apocalypse is Choplifter Amiga, and it is a delightfully faithful to the 8-bit original: a great, ragged jungle setting, lots of little buildings to burn down, little people to collect and a range of nasty surprises for chopper pilots who dally too long in hostile airspace. Remember: he who flies in front of the howitzer goes down in flames.

Notes: Apocalypse turned out to be a relay race. The project was started by a developer called Strangeways, then brought to completion by Miracle Games. Miracle reportedly was also mounting a rescue operation on an isometric adventure called Dick Special. It never appeared.

Breathless (Power Computing):

I guess this one stays because I just like this sort of game ... and Breathless isn't bad. This 3D shooter from Italy is not the best of the Doom variants. I clock it in somewhere below the original AB3D. There is something too squared-off in its appearance, too

broad in the enemy graphics, and slightly tedious in its level design.

But, within the limited world of Amiga Doom clones, it is a good solid game — a big step up from Fears — and it has a roomier feel than the small-feeling AB3D. Notes: A number of Breathless patches — including 060 support — have been uploaded to AmiNet.

Cadaver (Imageworks):

The Bitmap Brothers' crowning achievement is a dense, glossy puzzle/adventure of action, object inventory, and mystery. Like the best games, you don't simply play it, but live it in a sort of trance. It seems to physically occupy your head and take up every bit of space except an air pocket at the top of your skull. Downside: There is so much to Cadaver that it is easy to get lost in the game's intricacies.

Notes: There's an HD installer on AmiNet. The Bits also made a follow-up data disk called The Pay-Off — it is a killer — and a complete, non-game level was distributed by Zero magazine in 1991.

Cannon Fodder 2 (Virgin):

Cannon Fodder 2 is very much what you would expect a sequel to be: a little of the old Cannon Fodder, a little Cannon Fodder with aliens, a lot

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of Cannon Fodder set in the past. Which is to say it is high entertainment. It does sacrifice some of the happy consistency of the original — the first Cannon Fodder really did feel like a campaign — but Cannon Fodder 2 adds the odd twist and an absolutely cutthroat difficulty level. The first alien phase is a doozy. Notes: V. 1.2 of Jean-Francois Fabre's excellent patch — available via AmiNet — allows you to install the game to hard disk.

That is all for this month. Next issue, Peter will complete his current inventory. We hope this has been some help in your own gaming selection and it has even caused you to review a few games you once played, but have forgotten. Remember, there are no old jokes or old games, just undiscovered journeys.—ED.

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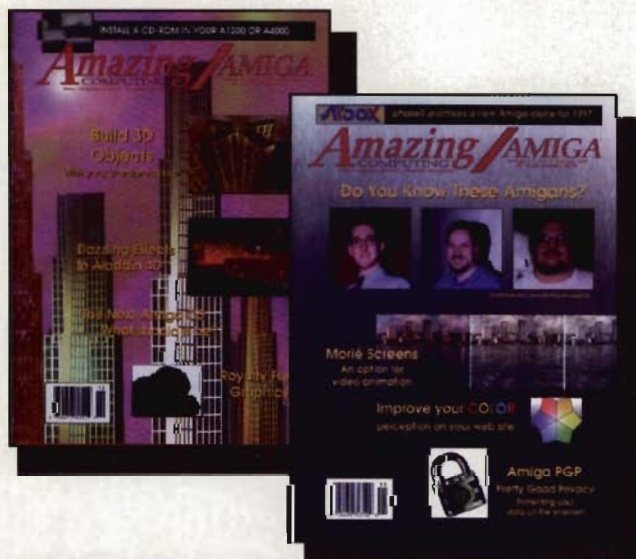
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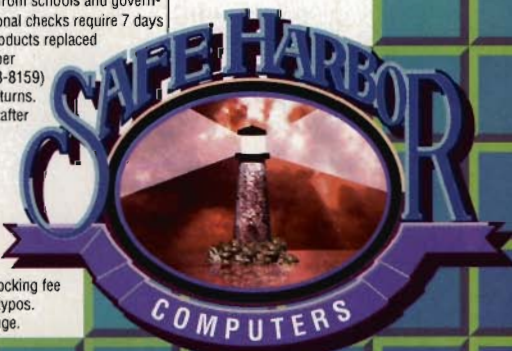
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And the Winner is?



Once again the Amiga is purchased by a black-horse bidder. But, unlike Escom, Gateway 2000 is a known player in the North American PC market.

The strange turn of events in the Amiga market just took one more turn as Gateway 2000 announced that they had made and won the bid for the Amiga. In a press release dated 3/27/97, Gateway made the following announcement:

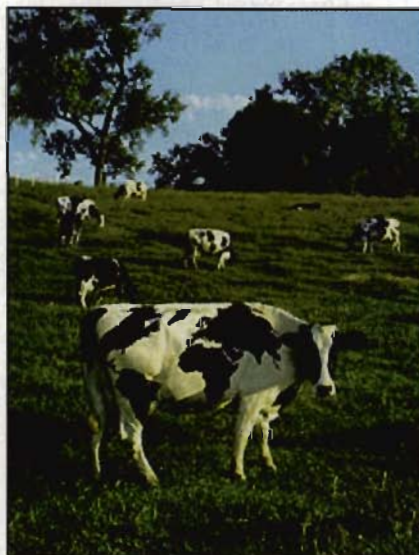
"Gateway 2000 makes offer to acquire assets of AMIGA Technologies, GmbH"

NORTH SIOUX CITY, S.D., March 27, 1997 - Gateway 2000, Inc. (Nasdaq: GATE) today announced that the company has made an offer to acquire the assets of AMIGA Technologies including all patents, trademarks and trade names. The company is a subsidiary of ESCOM AG, a German-based computer company that went into bankruptcy in July of 1996. AMIGA led the industry in combining computer graphics, animation, and film sequences with stereo sound known today as multimedia. The offer has been accepted by the court-appointed Administrator in Bankruptcy in Germany acting on behalf of AMIGA. The agreement is subject to regulatory approval.

"This acquisition is good news for Gateway and customers of AMIGA," said Rick Snyder, president and COO of Gateway 2000. "It will strengthen our intellectual property position and invigorate a company that has been

a pioneer in multimedia solutions and operating systems technology."

AMIGA Technologies will be renamed AMIGA International. The company will operate as a separate business unit and will retain its current president, Petro Tyschtschenko, who will work to develop new products for the AMIGA market.



Gateway 2000 maintains a unique philosophy in both marketing and customer relations.

"Gateway 2000 will give us new life and energy for the future," said Tyschtschenko.

About Gateway 2000
Gateway 2000, Inc., a Fortune 500 company founded in 1985, is a global leader in the direct marketing of PCs. The company, headquartered in North Sioux City, South Dakota, has manufacturing facilities in the United States,

Ireland and Malaysia, and employs over 9,700 people worldwide. Gateway 2000 products and services consistently win top awards from leading industry publications. In 1996, the company shipped 1.9 million systems and reported revenues of \$5 billion and net income of \$250 million.

About AMIGA

Since the introduction of the AMIGA A1000 in 1985, AMIGA has represented the embodiment of the efficient use of memory and hard drive capacity, while pioneering industry developments in multimedia, 32-bit multitasking and autoconfiguration."

Surprise, Surprise, Surprise!

To say that this news was a surprise is putting it mildly. By the time most users learned of the business, it was the following Monday and people believed that the entire release was an April Fools joke. Jean-Louis Gassée of Be Computers wrote about his experiences in his April 2nd newsletter to Be developers:

"Gateway 2000 just announced their acquisition of the assets of Amiga Technologies, the German company that had acquired rights to the Amiga from Commodore after the company went under. I learned this from one of our engineers, an early Amiga fan, who e-mailed me a copy of a Reuters dispatch. Seeing the date, knowing he's prone to pranks, remembering his association with the Amiga, I thought he had crafted the whole story and proceeded to congratulate him on yet another bit of creative writing."

The Gateway 2000 logo as well as the individual pictures for this article are the property of Gateway 2000 who retains all copyrights.

Mr. Gassée went on to say, "My guess is that Gateway is looking for multimedia expansions to their product line. They've been shipping the large-screen PC TV for a while, and Amiga used to be the multimedia innovator in the PC business before Commodore and Escom (the German company that owned Amiga Technologies) got in trouble, taking the Amiga with them. Amiga Technologies might have had some exciting technology under development. We'll see. It's good to know a company such as Gateway is interested in the Amiga world."

Speculation

Unfortunately, Gateway 2000 has not been able to elaborate on their release of March 27. Amazing Computing spoke with a reliable source at Gateway 2000 who stated, "We are working on building a comprehensive strategy for the Amiga."

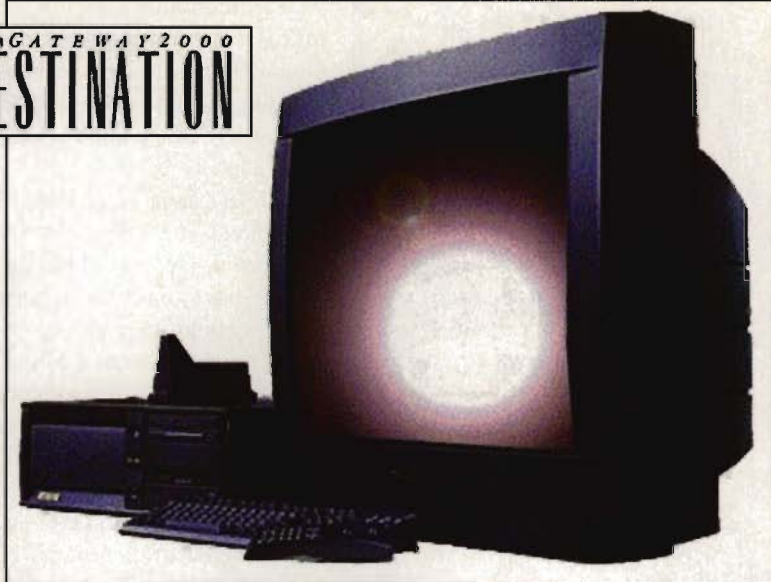
In a release dated April 17, Gateway 2000 addressed the growing calls for information from Amiga users (for a complete version of this release, please see New Products on page 9 of this issue). Gateway announced that they would hold a press conference during the World of Amiga in London May 17-18. At the same time, the notice also stated that they had received many phone calls and messages from the Amiga community. They thanked the Amiga users for the interest which was far beyond their expectations.

Petro Tyschtschenko

In a phone interview, Petro Tyschtschenko related his impressions of Gateway 2000. "We have a great future. They will continue. Don't worry about that."

Petro had been working directly with the trustees throughout the entire sales process. Although resoundingly positive, Petro did talk about the strain he had experienced. "The last nine months has been one of the most terrible times in my life. It was the second bankruptcy that was not our fault. I was down, but I got a lot of support from the Amiga community.

GATEWAY 2000 DESTINATION



Gateway 2000's Destination was the first TV and computer combination consumer product. Some believe the purchase of Amiga Technologies was made to further enhance this product line.

That gave me the energy to keep the Amiga alive."

Financial considerations were a problem for Mr. Tyschtschenko. "I had

Gateway 2000, lets users know Petro is probably right.

Gateway 2000's History

According to their published company history, Gateway 2000 was founded in September 1985 in Sioux City, Iowa by its chairman and CEO, Ted Waitt, and his business partner Mike Hammond, Vice President. They started by placing ads in computer-related publications and selling hardware peripherals and software directly to end users of Texas Instrument personal computers. In their first four months, they grossed \$100,000.

In 1987, Gateway 2000 designed and assembled its own PCs and sold them directly to the public. Their goal was to sell quality PCs directly to the consumer at an aggressive price. Gateway 2000 reported revenues of \$1.5 million in 1987, \$12 million in 1988, \$70.6 million in 1989, \$275 million in 1990, \$626 million in 1991, \$1.1 billion in 1992, \$1.7 billion in 1993, \$2.7 billion in 1994, \$3.7 billion in 1995, and Sales in 1996 were \$5.04 billion.

According to company sources, Gateway 2000 now sells more PC-compatible systems in the U.S. through direct marketing than any other vendor. It has support facilities in Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Hampton, Virginia; Kansas City, Missouri; as



In 1996, Gateway 2000 shipped 1,909,000 units to achieve a \$250.7 million net income for the year.

other offers, but I chose to stick with the Amiga. Looking back, I know it was the best choice."

Petro's views on Gateway 2000 remains extremely positive. "They will keep the Amiga alive. They have great plans but they need time to prepare them and then make the announcement. They want to make a statement and stick to it." A quick look at

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well as international facilities and offices in Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Japan, Malaysia, Sweden, the U.K., United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.), and Sydney, Australia.

Until now, Gateway 2000 has sold only Intel® and Pentium® processor-based computers. They offer a full line of DOS based machines from their Gateway Solo™ Pentium processor-based notebook to the Destination™ big screen PC, the first convergence product which combines big-screen television and a computer.

Aside from mail order, Gateway also has country stores strategically established in areas around the world. They have also opened two such stores for their North America customers: one in New Haven, CT and one in Charlotte, NC.

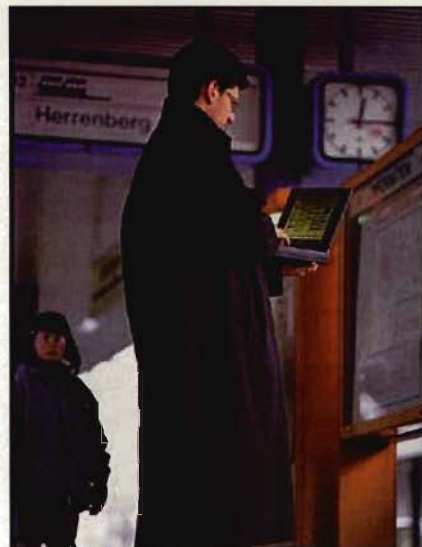
According to company representatives, Gateway 2000 prides itself on its customer relations. Gateway has a reputation of customer satisfaction. For the most part, Gateway sells directly to end users rather than through dealers and distributors. This last may be the most unsettling for the current Amiga market which relies heavily on Amiga dealerships and mail order distribution. However, Gateway 2000 until now has sold only PC units which were easily understood by their customers. It is yet to be seen, if Gateway 2000 would be willing to give up the built-in expertise of Amiga dealers, who can offer support as well as salesmanship for the Amiga line.

Gateway 2000 and Marketing

Since Gateway 2000 relies almost completely on phone and mail orders, it is no surprise that they remain one of the most aggressive advertisers in the PC market. Every issue of the general PC magazines contains multi-page sections on Gateway products.

Gateway 2000 began by leveraging off of their cow barn heritage. They used cows in their print ads by placing bovines in very unusual circumstances. One of the most memorable was a cow winning a horse race.

They continued the cow theme through their shipping. Gateway has



Gateway 2000 has been expanding both their market share and their facilities outside North America. This shot was from their 1995 financial report which showed their new Solo PC laptop in use in Germany.

gained customer recognition by using black and white "cow" designed boxes. Whether on a UPS truck, in someone's warehouse, or even in a scene from a television show, customers quickly recognized the Gateway computer by its very unique packaging.

Recently Gateway 2000 branched out into television advertising and once again they were unique in their approach. Almost everyone remembers the two elderly souvenir salespeople who built their store near Gateway's offices so they could benefit from all the traffic Gateway generated with their record sales. Unfortunately, they did not learn until later that the traffic was all by phone and no one would be driving by their store.

As an opposite to the outward sale, Gateway 2000 also continues to run a series of commercials in which their workers talk about the computers. These feel-good commercials cover everything from how personalized your computer is (during assembly, the computer carries the paperwork with the name of the person it is being created for) to a commercial where various workers just asked the viewers to call.

Circle 150 on Reader Service card.

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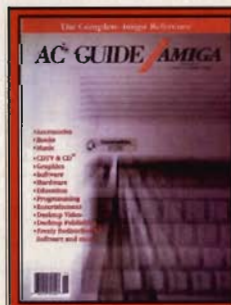
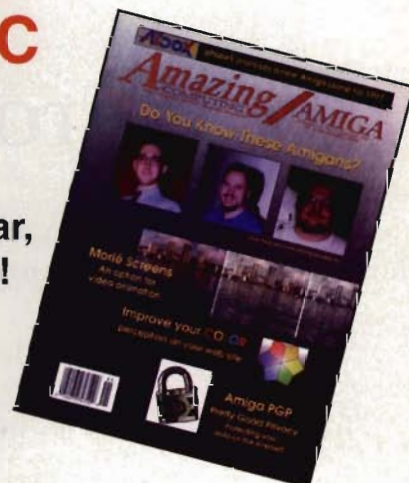
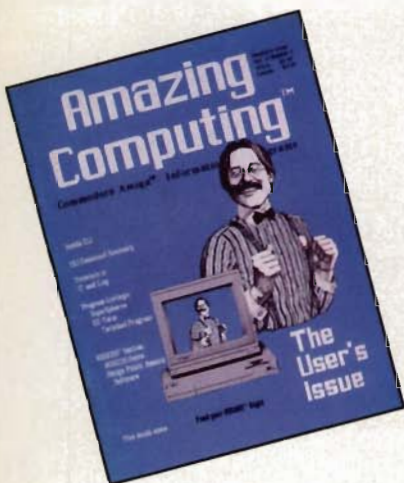
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Circle 153 on Reader Service card.

Many Amiga users have warmed to the fact that Gateway 2000 will be the next owner of the Amiga, just by the expertise they bring to marketing. After all, they reason, that would be something new to the Amiga market.

Amiga Reaction

The Nets were alive with reactions by Amiga users when the news was first announced. From individuals to companies, everybody was excited by the possibility, even though they had not known about it before.

QuikPak placed a letter on their web page in which they noted, "Gateway 2000 is a tremendous success story - continually scoring top marks in customer satisfaction surveys based on service, support, and product reliability. Gateway 2000 is a leader in its market, and brings to the Amiga Community a wealth of resources and knowledge."

In case there was any question as to how QuikPak felt losing the bid to Gateway, they said, "While we are understandably disappointed that our

own bid was unsuccessful, we at QuikPak remain as committed as ever to the future of the Amiga. We have devoted a large portion of our energies to developing the Amiga market and supporting the community, and we have no intention of abandoning our position now. The Gateway 2000 purchase may represent an excellent opportunity to breathe new life into the Amiga platform. We've maintained all along that we believe in the future of the Amiga, and stand by our statements."

The message went on to say, "We look forward to working with you, the user, and all our other partners in making the Amiga's future as bright as possible. And, we look forward to the opportunity of working with the newest player in the Amiga field, Gateway 2000."

Dan Lutz of Anti Gravity was quoted in the Amiga Web Directory, "We're very pleased that the Amiga has been purchased by an American company with such prestige in the

computer industry. Gateway's marketing savvy and successful promotion of its products is a refreshing change from the Commodore Dominion of old."

Dan went on to state, "We have noticed a surge in business ever since this announcement." He also wrote, "Anti Gravity Labs currently has many Amiga products in development that will be released now that the Amiga buyout standstill is over."

These comments have been echoed by a growing number of Amiga developers and users. Now, the Amiga market is once again waiting. Everyone is waiting for the May 17th press announcement.

There is no question that Gateway 2000 has the experience and expertise to build the Amiga market. They have already stated that they are interested in the value of the technology. Now, the Amiga market is waiting to see if Gateway will put these factors together to create the next level in Amiga development.

•AC•

(continued from page 48)

LightWave 5.5 for all platforms but the Amiga would ship in the second quarter of 97. The follow up question got the response that 5.0 would be the last version of LightWave for the Amiga until future development was done on the operating system and architecture.

The second announcement from NewTek introduced Calibar an ultraminiature NTSC test signal generator. Calibar was the only NewTek product being demonstrated at the small NewTek booth on the other side of the Sands.

Calibar

Calibar is about the size of a pen, operates on battery or AC power, and performs 24 test pattern functions. Calibar can function as a black burst generator for house sync when used with the AC adapter. Calibar will retail for \$349.00. It is a slick little tool. But, is it something for the average Video Toaster/Flyer user?

This was the question that I put to Harold Russell, Director of Video for NewTek. Calibrating your video monitors is one immediate and practical use for the Toaster/Flyer user. Using Calibar as a SMPTE color bar generator it will be easy to adjust all of your monitors. Harold said that Calibar would ship with a blue filter so that the chrominance and luminance signal could be accurately set and maintained. Calibar has many more advantages for video use as a test signal generator - especially for the larger production facility.

Dwight Parscale

I caught up with Dwight Parscale, CEO of NewTek, at the booth. Dwight mentioned that Gateway and NewTek had been talking and that they have exchanged nondisclosure agreements with each other. A face to face meeting between NewTek and Gateway will take place within two weeks of NAB. His discussions with Gateway indicated that they did not want to abandon the Amiga but rather they were inclined

to develop and enhance the engineering of the Amiga.

Dwight likened the history of NewTek to that of a little garage operation at the beginning, then a bigger garage operation and finally now a business. NewTek just finished its most profitable year ever. NewTek had 40 employees two years ago. Today they have 90. A healthy NewTek can only be good for the Amiga community.

Revolution

NewTek started a revolution. The effects of that revolution were in evidence everywhere at the convention. Everywhere there were products attempting to do what the Toaster and the Flyer have been doing for years. Many of these second wave products are in the development stage and promised for a release in the near future.

Meanwhile, the Toaster/Flyer demonstrations at the NewTek booth

drew crowds of people interested in the capabilities of the Amiga. NewTek has not been resting on its laurels. New and exciting products are on the way for the video industry. And, with Gateway now in the picture, hopefully the Amiga will find a resurgence and continue the revolution.

•AC•

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Chaocity reluctantly is closing its doors. Unfortunately, we have reached the point that we don't have the resources available to keep open much longer, so we want to take this chance to let the Amiga community know how much we appreciate their support. Chaocity will close its doors July 1. We will maintain tech support by mail and email at least through the end of 1998.

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NewTek @ NAB 97

There are hundreds of displays at the National Association of Broadcasters each year, but NewTek remains a key player.

by Thomas G. Reed

The National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) held their 1997 convention at the Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas Hilton and the Sands Expo Center from April 7 - 10. About 100,000 registrants were in attendance looking at over 1,200 exhibits and listening to presentations from top industry leaders. The exhibits covered an area of more than 750,000 net square feet.

NAB '97 and NAB MultiMedia World, sponsored and produced by the National Association of Broadcasters, is the world's largest trade event for radio, television, multimedia, post-production video and electronic communications industries. The Sands Expo Center housed the NAB MultiMedia World Exhibits (over 600 exhibits) covering more than 275,000 net square feet.

Ferreting out Amiga related material is difficult through this maze

of glitz and glitter. NewTek was clearly the place to begin. That meant that my journey would begin at the Sands with a search for NewTek.



NewTek



NewTek Booth

The NAB program listed two booths for NewTek at the Sands Expo Center. A friend told me there was a small booth for NewTek over against the wall. A small booth for NewTek was not what I wanted to hear. An ominous sign I thought! The search continued for the other NewTek booth. This booth was a large hopeful presentation full of all the glitz and glitter of a prosperous vibrant company. This I liked better.

The NewTek booth had a major demonstration area covered by half a geodesic dome with sixteen smaller pods clustered around the major demonstration site. The smaller pods had fourteen NewTek partners demonstrating software and products mostly for LightWave and mostly for the PC versions of LightWave.

A large crowd was watching a demonstration of ToasterPaint when I walked up to the booth. The graphic screen being created looked great! Nothing earth shaking or new but the crowd was enjoying the demo very much. In fact, each time that I visited the NewTek booth large crowds were milling around or watching a demonstration of either the Flyer, Toaster, or LightWave3D.

New Products

Stopping at NewTek's information booth, I asked what new products or releases were being announced. The attendant said that an update to the Flyer software would be in the mail shortly to all registered users (version 4.2), 5.0 for the Flyer was in the works,

(continued on page 47)



Dwight Parscale, CEO of NewTek, mentioned that Gateway 2000 and NewTek had been talking and they have exchanged nondisclosure agreements.

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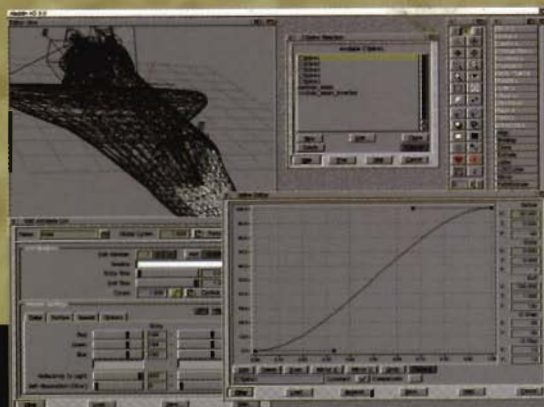
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